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CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT OF
GREAT BRITAIN

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Contemporary Thought of Great Britain

by

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*Stanton Lecturer in the Philosophy of Religion
in the University of Cambridge*



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PREFACE

THERE is a great temptation to exaggerate the significance of the thought of one's own time. There is a far greater temptation to exaggerate the importance of the thought of one's own people. One who owes much of what he values in his own education to other European peoples, and who in later years has endeavoured in the East to learn of its wisdom, may be allowed to suggest that a study of non-British thought is a too often unrecognised and unsatisfied need of British thinkers. It is also evident that both in the West and in the East there has been a misunderstanding and a misrepresentation of the leading tendencies of British thought. It is not, however, the purpose of this book to give a comparative study of British and other movements of contemporary thought, or to present British thought from the points of view of non-British opinion. It should thus be a source of considerable satisfaction that the publishers have arranged for this series of volumes which give brief introductions to the contemporary thought of the different countries of the East and the West. In itself each volume may not do much to counteract the tendency to forms of nationalistic or racial

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intellectualism, but the series as a whole may do something to wean thinkers from the one-sidednesses and the limitations of vision which come from isolation.

If the estimate of the value of British philosophical thought in this volume is not unduly high, it is not because the writer can point to the contemporary thought of any other people as to-day of outstanding eminence. There is a practical wisdom and a general intellectual sanity in the British character which not a few will regard as counter-balancing any deficiency in philosophical brilliance. On the other hand, it may be suggested in passing that we might learn something from the thought of the East which may aid us in the attainment of a more satisfactory view of our place in existence and lead us to more spiritual peace.

Among contemporary British thinkers there is a great dislike of labels descriptive of their philosophical positions. Such labels are considered to be misleading in the now common instances in which there is little definiteness and little depth of thought. Even for the thinkers discussed in the following pages the descriptions adopted as titles of the chapters must be regarded as merely suggestive and adopted for convenience. They have been chosen for their brevity and because they bring out dominant features of the groups into which it seems best to arrange these thinkers. Naturalism indicates that Nature is given primary importance: Absolute
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Idealism suggests that the ultimates of thought are treated as fundamental: Pragmatist Humanism gives mankind in action and enjoyment the central place in human thought: Realism insists on realities as distinct from the supposed merely subjective: Theism centres attention upon God. In such a work as the present some form of grouping is necessary. Without it the impression might be given that British thought is even more diverse and lacking in forms of unity than it is. That there is a lack of a dominant movement, that even the search for unity seems almost despised, are already sufficiently serious defects, without increasing the appearance of diversity by abandoning all grouping. It is to be regretted that no attempt was made at grouping in the two volumes on *Contemporary British Philosophy* edited by Professor J. H. Muirhead. For serious students of British philosophy they are indispensable.

It will be understood that it is not from any discourtesy that in order to avoid the continual repetition of "Lord" so and so and "Sir" so and so, "Professor" this and "Dr." that, all such titles have been omitted. The practice here adopted, of a general limitation to plain names, is not an unknown one when reference is to men of eminence. In a short treatise such as this many thinkers of outstanding merit have had to be omitted in order that the main issues should not be confused by the further curtailing of discussions already too brief.

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However, if this book leads its readers, as the writer hopes, to a full study of the works discussed in it, they will in due course be introduced to the positions of other important thinkers whose works it has been found impossible to consider here. Those who wish to study the earlier philosophical thought in Britain may be referred to Professor W. R. Sorley's *A History of English Philosophy*, Cambridge, 1920, which traces its history "from the time when it began to be written in the English language until the end of the Victorian era."

ALBAN G. WIDGERY.

*Cambridge,
July 1927.*

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

IN the increased intercourse of peoples and the world-wide exchange of ideas within the last two centuries, certain general conceptions have come to be accepted concerning the characteristics of the leading nations. These conceptions have originated as the result of the many-sided interaction both of thought and of practical affairs. In spite of their one-sidedness they persist because of their essential truth. The British have thus acquired the reputation of being a predominantly honest race devoted principally to colonisation, to industry and commerce, and other activities of a so-called utilitarian kind. Outside their own countries they have rarely been regarded as keenly enthusiastic or strikingly productive in the realms of art. It cannot be seriously maintained that the history of their religious life reveals many personalities conspicuous for saintliness or profound mysticism. Certainly

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they have never even considered themselves a race pre-eminent for its thinkers.

To all these statements there are exceptions, but they are such as chiefly to make the general rule more evident. Not only has the number of those who have given themselves up to the arts been comparatively small, but, further, the motive of their art has more often than not been naturalistic and realistic. British art has rarely striven to express the factor of mystery in existence, or any symbolism of an order of ideas different from those of common everyday life. Eminence in religion has usually been confused with moral excellence and social philanthropy, whether devoted to the alleviation of physical suffering or to efforts to save other men from their sins. Scientific endeavour has not often or for long lost touch with practical problems. Even philosophical reflection, which has been the concern of so few, has been marked by a certain reserve—a reserve which, with its avoidance of the quixotic, has, except in the rarest instances, prevented boldness and daring in speculation.

Such a general conception of the British mental attitude is not rightly or fairly described in Heine's terms as innate materialism. Nor is it justly to be supposed, as not a few Orientals have done, that it is entirely lacking in appreciation of the things of the spirit. Nevertheless it must surely be admitted that the so-called higher interests of life have been relegated to the margin of activity and experience.

They have rarely been made the central and dominating purpose to the extent of conspicuous sacrifice of those material values which make life comfortable. Fortune has never been so niggardly in its material endowments of the British race as to make it regard them with a spirit of renunciation and seek welfare in "other-worldly" values. Nor has it been so profuse in these endowments as to give to many such physical wealth as to accord them the means and leisure to devote themselves entirely to the things of higher culture.

It is with this impression, which seems true of the present as of the past, that I embark upon a more detailed consideration of the leading characteristics of contemporary British thought. A study of this kind must inevitably in large measure be a distinctively personal one. Explicitly to admit that may also help in deciding the sense which may here be given to the term "contemporary." A writer who is well over the threshold of middle-age may justifiably regard as contemporary the forces and movements which have existed and grown up during his own active mental life. And this is roughly the period included in the first quarter of the present century. It is thus that some persons who have died within this period are included, in that their activities were fundamental in forming its thought. Their work has been directly or indirectly instrumental in determining leading movements in the thought of the immediate present.

Any attempt to survey this period is rendered extraordinarily difficult by the Great War, which, beginning a little later than half-way through it, produced effects continuing into the present. Of this something must be said later. For the moment it is interesting to note that the period itself began with war for the British. The South African War was not only a stimulus to British activity, but it had also some far-reaching effects on the nature of the development of the British political consciousness. For, directly and indirectly, the idea of a British Commonwealth of self-governing peoples united by common aims, and in some measure by common traditions, was immensely accelerated by the political adjustments to which that war ultimately led. And this in turn has aided the movement for the acceptance of the idea of a world-wide League of Nations, and has promoted thoughts of a universal human development in which all peoples may and should play their part.

At the outbreak of the Great War there were not a few who looked upon British participation as essentially motivated by the defence of Belgium and of the rights of small nations. At the end there were those who hoped for a peace which can only be described as idealistic. The plain facts should be recognised. The fundamental thought determining British participation was the need of preventing the possible menace of a too powerful Germany. The peace was inspired with the desire finally to

dispose of such a menace. Here, as almost always, was just mere British common-sense, no more and no less.

It might have been expected that the tragic events of the Great War would have aroused British minds from their traditional complacency; that the deeper problems of existence would have been more keenly felt, and thought intensely and widely stimulated to deal with them. For a time, especially after the first shock and with the commencement of recognition of the vastness of the catastrophe, there was a little public discussion of the place of evil in existence, and more incidentally of the meaning of life. Some few of the ministers of religion who were not urging men actively to take part in the conflict seemed to find it a more easy task to try to "justify the ways of God to men" than to justify the ways of men to God. It might have been supposed that the extent of the tragedy would have led to a considerable amount of pessimism as to the nature of existence. It was not so. The normal Briton is far too robust physically to remain long in gloomy despair or to accept a pessimistic theory. Consideration of British thought in the light of the experience of the Great War leads one to the conclusion that it is in no small degree influenced and its aim determined by sanguine temperament. The serious problems brought into attention for a while seem now by the great majority almost forgotten. There is a general neglect of the task of seeking a reasoned

philosophy of life, a view of existence in which man has or might find a definitely significant orientation.

It is not surprising that an individual thinker with his suggestions, however forcibly presented, should fail to do what even the actualities of the Great War did not accomplish. *Thomas Hardy's* powerful picturing of tragic aspects of life has made no enduring impression on the opinions of any considerable number of English men and women. While his stories and poems hold the attention of British readers with the fascination of the appeal of the tragic, the vast majority are not thereby led to any sustained or profound consideration of the deeper problems implied. Neither do they inquire very definitely into the question of Hardy's fundamental convictions. Indeed it is always precarious to endeavour to come to the personal opinions of any writer who expresses himself chiefly in fiction and in poetry. The moods, the attitudes, the ideas he presents may be for artistic purposes and not a mirror of his own personal convictions. Nevertheless, it seems true that in the works of Thomas Hardy some of his own real opinions are persistently revealed.

For the present study it is interesting to notice that Hardy's masterpiece, the epic drama, *The Dynasts*, in which his most forceful and sustained exposition of a philosophical attitude is to be found, was published in parts within the early years of this

century. Incidentally and in a fragmentary manner, the preceding novels indicate similar ideas, but compared with *The Dynasts* they are of little significance as expositions of a view of existence. It is not necessary to endeavour to trace Hardy's ideas to extraneous sources, such as an influence of Schopenhauer. Whatever influences he may have felt from others, every page of his work reveals the intensity of the experience and the independent thought of the writer. At the outset, in the preface to *The Dynasts*, Hardy seems to affirm that his attitude is largely in accordance with what is necessitated by modern science. For he considers that the anthropomorphic conception of the Fundamental Energy has been so long abandoned by thinkers and the "monistic theory of the Universe" so definitely accepted, that even in verse one cannot well use the masculine pronoun to refer to that energy, nor can one suggest divine beings as sources of causation. This does not mean that Hardy adopts a materialistic view of reality. In fact, in some of his books there are distinct tendencies towards a metaphysical idealism. The nature of reality is other than matter as known to the senses. Nevertheless, though Hardy uses what must be denominated psychical terms, calling the ultimate reality Will, it must be questioned whether this term as applied by him corresponds to that for which it stands in modern psychology or to that which we know in our own psychical life. Thus, in the fore-scene to *The*

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Dynasts, the Will is described as "Ever-unconscious."

"The Will has woven with an absent heed,
Since life first was, and ever will so weave."

That is not Will as experienced by us. Yet, if the Will is Immanent, it seems to have awakened to consciousness at least in Thomas Hardy, and in so doing to be aware of its own unconsciousness!

As a matter of fact, it has always been difficult for Hardy to avoid anthropomorphic expressions. In his early tales Nature in its relation with human beings has the character of a great indefinite personality. Nature and mankind are both alike expressions of the Will; and in both there is evident no small degree of chaos. Both alike are devoid of freedom: for the Will is "the Prime Mover of the Gear", "the Director of the Puppet Show." There is here involved a problem—that of the relation of man to the universe—which calls for systematic philosophical consideration. This ultimate problem is suggested again and again in a variety of texts and in different connections. Thus, for example, though the Immanent Will "works unwittingly," man, who is supposed to be produced by It, *knows* that it works unwittingly. Man—or at least Thomas Hardy—produced by It, and in whom It is immanent (whatever that may mean), *knows* that

"Of Its doings if it knew,
What it does It would not do."

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There is thus a production of man by It, and yet a man in some way distinct from It has a knowledge which It does not possess. For man could not affirm that "It would not do what It does (if It knew)" unless man knows "What It does not know," that is, "what It does." The term Will is, after all, little more than a doubtful euphemism for a force, blind and apparently less clearly established than the mechanical power of a naturalistic theory of the universe.

It is perhaps, though not necessarily or indubitably, true that mankind is ignorant of the larger movements of destiny. On the other hand, it is not impossible that through our moral consciousness something of the chief significance of existence may be in process of being manifested to us. Hardy warns us not to apply to the Will the ethical standards which have been evolved among men. But it may be asked: Why not? It may surely be maintained, and that not unreasonably, that the Supreme Power, call it Will if one wishes, has led man both to these standards and to their application to Itself.

Notwithstanding these ideas of the blind Will and of the Puppet Show of existence, Thomas Hardy is not irretrievably pessimistic. Redemption, if it may be called such, appears at times in the possibility of a future condition of endless unconsciousness. Or, contrariwise, salvation may come through harmony attained by the Immanent Will becoming entirely conscious. At other times in

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Hardy's works the appearance of theoretic pessimism is replaced by an attitude of practical meliorism, by a recognition and a teaching of improvement by human effect.

Thomas Hardy is primarily an artist, and quite apart from his own feelings and beliefs, it may be supposed that he has learned—as so many great writers—the power of appeal which lies in the description of the tragic. He has brought vividly before contemporary British thought something of the chaotic and of the ironic in the reality of evil. It may be that his influence has helped to undermine the superficial Idealisms which, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, lulled the British into their apathetic complacency. Contemporary British thought must, and indeed does, recognise that Hardy's ideas set problems; and though the effect of their presentation in artistic setting may depend on their containing some truth, they may not reveal the whole or the main truth of life and existence.

It is well to embark upon the study of contemporary British thought by the consideration of one who portrays vividly the reality of the aspects of chaos, irrationality, and suffering. It is well, in view of the general superficiality and intellectual apathy, that one should try at least to be aware of those who are profoundly serious. One other such is *George Bernard Shaw*, whose humour is of the

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excellence of the thinker who is also a skilled artist, in that intrinsically interesting in itself it also points beyond itself. There is much in Shaw's thought which at first sight resembles the main idea of Hardy, but the outlook is markedly different. For, though he is in no small measure dissatisfied with the present conditions of existence, an optimistic belief lies at the basis of his teachings. Instead of the "Unconscious Will" we have here the "Life-Force"; but it does not seem that there is any great distinction between the two terms. Shaw finds it as difficult as Hardy to avoid describing his ultimate in terms which have, as far as we know, meaning only with reference to a consciousness. Thus sometimes the Life-Force is good, sometimes evil, sometimes foolish. One may believe, however, that It was wise at least once—in the production of Shaw!

The notion of the Life-Force suggests a connection with the modern idea of biological evolution. Looking at existence from the point of view of evolution, Shaw has a belief in the possibility, apparently the inevitability, of a further advance to a condition of being so far above man, now known, as to require to be called by another name—the Superman. In the play *Man and Superman*, the Life-Force, directed towards this aim, is depicted as overcoming all attempts to resist it. In the process of evolution the Life-Force comes to greater self-consciousness, so that it is intelligible that the

effort to go beyond the present condition of man should become more and more deliberate. Hence the emergence of the science of eugenics, and the need of bringing its conclusions to bear on practice.

It might be expected that some indication would be given as to the nature of the Superman, the ideal towards which men are to strive. It might reasonably be asked upon what basis men may be called consciously to sacrifice themselves for the attainment of that ideal. It is difficult to find in Shaw's work any serious consideration of these problems. The impression is sometimes given that men must, at others that they should, submit to the demands of the Life-Force. If men cannot but obey, there is nothing more to be said than to ask, "Whence this delusion that they can choose?" If they can disobey, some ground is required for sacrificing present values for the eventual and after all still hypothetical attainment of a Superman, of whom we may never know.

The Life-Force, if Shaw is rightly understood, appears to have been blind and gradually to be attaining full sight. The phrases Life-Force and Immanent Will are just single terms given a universal application. As Hardy has never seriously discussed in his writings the problem of the relation of the individual to the Immanent Will, so also Shaw does not appear to appreciate the similar type of problem involved in his own views. The significance of the individual's life seems primarily in its

being a step towards the attainment of the Superman, and, presumably, in the second place in the good experiences through which it passes in this earthly existence. Whether the Superman is to have permanent worth, or to be simply a stage towards a condition still higher, does not much concern Shaw. It is of the essence of Shaw's thought that the universe is in process of some kind of growth, but he does not consider the implications of the fact that somehow or other we come to apprehend, though only by stages, the character of that towards which we should strive.

One writer finds in Shaw a fundamental mysticism: "I have heard him say (in the laughingly matter-of-fact tone he always instinctively adopts to hide his feelings) that an empty cathedral is the one place he can go into and pray and express his soul." "I emphatically say that no one can hope to understand Bernard Shaw, or to have the faintest glimmering of what he is driving at, unless they recognise this essential part of him—the ascetic mystic who dwells with God." And this mystic has a "spirit of intense sadness," gaiety is really utterly foreign to him. What may appear such is largely a mask. This may, indeed, be the truth about Shaw. A man of his calibre would not blink the recognition of the ultimate enigma of existence. Of his profound earnestness there can be no question. Nevertheless his thought, however mystical his temperament and personal attitude, endeavours to clothe

itself in terms of the late nineteenth-century conceptions of evolution rather than in traditional doctrines of religion.

Thomas Hardy, with his emphasis on the tragic, and Bernard Shaw, with his exposure of hollow shams, have both failed to make any deep impression upon ingrained British self-satisfaction and intellectual laziness. It may appear to some that *Gilbert Keith Chesterton*¹ has done his best to lull the British into an even more somnolent sense that they need no change from acquiescence in traditional doctrines and practice. But Chesterton is of far more importance than that. In fact he is convinced that men can only attain to truth and a wholesome attitude to life by *waking up* to the significance of traditional orthodoxy. Chesterton looks upon dogmas and institutions—or should we not rather say, Christian dogmas and Christian institutions—as forms adapted to the protection and transmission of valuable experiences.

Chesterton is more attractive as a critic than impressive in constructive defence. He has very aptly described the attitude of the present century, which takes infinite pains in the examination of details but neglects the task of comprehending their unity and significance. It is, he says, an attitude for which "Everything matters—except everything."

¹ *Heretics*. London, 1905.

Orthodoxy. London, 1908.

He has observed that popular phrases, such as "progress" and "liberty," are used in order to shirk the fundamental problem which they imply as to the nature of the good.

In *Orthodoxy* Chesterton contrasts the superficiality and narrowness of some recent tendencies of thought with the profounder and wider truth of orthodox Christianity. He is not particularly concerned with the ordinary intellectual efforts at the establishment of doctrines, but, in a series of impressionist studies, brings out the divergent implications of modern theories and of the traditional Christian doctrines. It is not that he disregards logic or is anything but a champion of reason—but that he is keenly aware of their abuse. "The poet only asks to get his head into the heavens. It is the logician who seeks to get the heavens into his head. And it is his head that splits." The abuse of logic and reason consists mainly in the tendency to narrowness, not treating a large number of things in a large way; the taking one "thin explanation and carrying it" too far. Thus, while the Christian may admit a considerable amount of settled order in the universe, the materialist cannot admit "the slightest speck of spiritualism or miracle." And yet materialists and such-like regard themselves as champions of free thought!

Chesterton insists that there must be a recognition of mystery. Such recognition enables the ordinary man to keep sane. It makes it possible for him to

accept both sides of an apparent contradiction, when he fails to see how they can be reconciled. There are tendencies in current thought says Chesterton, manifesting a suicidal mania. For example: "You cannot call up any wilder vision than a city in which men ask themselves if they have any selves. You cannot fancy a more sceptical world than one in which men doubt if there is a world." The efforts of John Davidson, or Shaw and even Wells to escape from the doomed fortress of rationalism by enthroning Will, Life-Force, fail. For the chief question for us with regard to will is: What to will? The praise of Will in general is futile, when the essential thing concerns what shall be the character of the particular acts of Will.

Modern Naturalism has frequently represented the repetition in Nature as though that of a dead thing, like a piece of clockwork. Such description is no more than an assumption. Nature's repetition may not be mere mechanical recurrence, but "a theatrical encore." The insistence of modern science on the vastness of the universe is really of little significance: as it is just one with itself, and as other than itself there is nothing to compare it with, it would be just as logical to call it small. A similar criticism applies in regard to the doctrine of the Superman: we cannot say that the Superman surpasses man in greatness without applying our human ideas of greatness.

Chesterton's attitude may be seen in a charge of

"the scientific fallacy" which he makes against Wells—"the habit of beginning not with the human soul, which is the first thing a man learns about, but with some such thing as protoplasm, which is about the last." The theory of evolution has led some to suppose that in passing "from the ape" they were naturally going to the "angel," whereas they may be "going to the devil." What impresses Chesterton is not so much the likeness between man and the lower animals, but the "monstrous scale" of the divergence.

Modern philosophy has a character of despair, thinks Chesterton, for it does not seriously believe that the universe has meaning. So, similarly, the "huge blunder" of our age is that instead of trying to alter the world of our experience to suit the ideal, we change the ideal to correspond with the world. On the contrary, man should "hate the world enough to want to change it, and love it enough to think it worth changing." To guide this change there must be a fixed ideal, which must be composite. Such an ideal is to be found in Christianity, and the ground for the acceptance of Christianity is not a simple form of theoretical argument but an accumulation of varied facts. It is in the light of this ideal that the universe and its processes may be seen to have meaning, and it is this ideal which, acknowledged and appreciated adequately, would be the antidote to the despair in contemporary philosophy.

Thus after an intellectual voyage on the unstable

seas of modern thought, Chesterton has eventually discovered that the shore on which he has come to rest is no new land but age-long traditional Christianity. He has found himself forced to admit that the world does not explain itself. Its design has something of beauty, and gives the same impression of something personal that a work of art does. "Last and strangest, there had come to my mind a vague and vast impression that in some way all good was a remnant to be stored and held sacred out of some primordial ruin." He can accept, therefore, the orthodox conception of original sin and the fall of man and the many phases of Christian theology associated therewith. Remarking that the chief thing about Wells' Utopia is a disbelief in original sin, Chesterton suggests that if Wells had taken himself as his starting-point, he would have "seen in the mere fact of having a self a permanent possibility of selfishness." It is just this that makes it so significant that Christianity teaches that man *may be damned*. All souls are separate and have their degree of freedom and responsibility: Chesterton emphatically objects to a not uncommon belief of Theosophists, that all souls are really one. Love is possible only with souls in some manner distinct: it is along such lines that one may appreciate the worth and truth of the Christian dogma of the Trinity of the Godhead, though that remains in essence a mystery. God himself is a society.

It may be seen that Chesterton makes no claim

to original contribution to contemporary thought. But, at a time, now perhaps coming to a close partly as a result of his work, when traditional Christianity was not so much "disproved" as disregarded as unworthy of serious intellectual consideration, he maintained that the Christian has reason to assume a dignified confidence in the intellectual status of his creed. Among literary men he is a definite protagonist of the reality of religion as involving something more than a simple humanitarianism. The affirmation of a "supernatural" factor is not for him a formal acknowledgement, but the assertion of a fundamental principle of life. In this he is opposed to the tendency, represented, in spite of appearances to the contrary, pre-eminently by Wells, to place emphasis overwhelmingly on biological evolution and the naturalistic aspects of human sociology.

There is probably no more voluminous and no more widely read British author to-day than *Herbert George Wells*.¹ Not only in works of fiction, but also in the consideration of social organisation and progress, he has exhibited a lively and well-balanced imagination. In the range of his ideas he at least endeavours to be as broad-minded and as comprehensive as human nature at its best can be. Whether

¹ *First and Last Things: a Confession of Faith and Rule of Life*. London, 1908; 2nd ed., revised, 1917.

God, the Invisible King. London, 1917.

Outlines of History. London, 1920.

he has actually succeeded in this is a question for itself: Wells should be accorded due acknowledgment of the intention. Important as they are for estimating his place among contemporary British thinkers, this is nevertheless not the place to survey his many stimulating works on social subjects, on which it is probable that his future fame will rest. They have an intimate relation with the principles of a more general character which represent his conception of existence. These he has expounded chiefly in two works: *First and Last Things* and *God, the Invisible King*.

In *First and Last Things*, Wells insists that in order to harmonise one's life, to give a means by which motive may be tried against motive, and an effectual peace of mind achieved, some synthetic idea and belief is required. How is this attained? Not by the methods of the physical sciences. For these require the ignoring of the peculiarities of individuals, and Wells is convinced that every individual, with each and all of his motives, has an importance in the general order of existence. The propositions of science, like all others seriously held, may be approximations to truth, though their practical convenience is no guarantee of their complete truth. In fact, Wells is impressed by the "incurable inaccuracy at present, and unavoidable sketchiness and artistry" of human thought. Nevertheless he would distinguish between those propositions of science which are frequently verified

and the more arbitrary propositions or beliefs relating to moral and religious questions. These latter have more of a spontaneous and artistic character. Wells thinks that we make all our beliefs as he admits he makes his own: "exactly as an artist draws lines to make a picture, to express my impression of the world and purpose." These beliefs must stand the test of practical experience: the universe may veto them.

All things have their importance and significance in existence, and among these Wells as man. And he finds that his life is possible only by regarding himself as a "free responsible person among responsible persons." "I see myself in life as part of a great physical being that strains and I believe grows towards beauty, and of a great mental being that strains and I believe grows towards knowledge and power." Power and Beauty, towards which we move, are ultimate, indefinable, a mystery. But Wells definitely rejects the idea that, in the sense of personal immortality, he may as a person participate eternally in these things. There may be something in him which will endure, but he looks upon himself as for a temporary purpose.

In the earlier book which we have been discussing Wells professedly writes as of his own personal views: in *God, the Invisible King*, he claims also to be the "scribe to the spirit of my generation." He finds in his own life—what it seems he must also

regard as in some way a common experience—something which makes him acknowledge a belief in God. It is important to notice the nature of this experience, which is quite other than persuasion through logical argument. "God comes. This cardinal experience is an undoubting immediate sense of God. It is the attainment of an absolute certainty that one is not alone in oneself. It is as if one was touched at every point by a being akin to oneself, sympathetic, beyond measure wiser, steadfast and pure in aim." "'Closer is He than breathing; nearer than hands and feet.'"

God, so experienced, is not an indefinable mystery. He is a person: that is central. He can be known as one knows a friend. Like ourselves, he is an active striving being, who "hopes and attempts." He can be served. He is helped and gladdened by us, whom he feels and knows, loves and inspires. He is the leader, with motives and an aim. He is the "Captain of Mankind," with "boundless love, courage, generosity, thought and steadfast will." Wells says that this idea is of God with a beginning, but it may be seriously doubted whether the notion of beginning is actually part of the modern conception of God. Further, God, as conceived by Wells, is not creator, not omnipresent, omniscient, or omnipotent. He is a "finite" being among finite beings. He is the loving elder brother, the *primus inter pares* among spirits.

Eventually Wells has turned to history. Without denying the possibility of other forms of presentation he develops his own exposition upon lines which exclude the idea of any kind of participation of "super-natural" influences in the course of events. To all appearances here his "Invisible King" might as well be non-existent. In his *Outlines of History*, admitting that we do not know how life begun on the earth, he indicates in broad comprehensive sweeps the stages in its evolution up to man, and then its main historical sequence among men. He recognises that the dawn and development of religious ideas form a necessary and central part of any human history. The question is whether one can describe such influence and such ideas without some suggestion of the nature of their implication. At one point Wells indicates his own attitude. "The teaching of history as we are unfolding it in this book is strictly in accordance with the teaching of Buddha." This he takes to be, not extinction, but "the extinction of futile personal aims that necessarily make life base, or pitiful, or dreadful. In short, it is: Whosoever would save his life shall lose it." But—the religion of Gautama is "flatly opposite to the immortality religions." It appears, therefore, that the "saved life" is no other than the "soul's peace." But surely that is to beg the question, for the "soul's peace" may depend upon its conviction of its own eternity.

Approaching the subject of Christianity, Wells

discards for his purpose the "supernaturalistic" view, and describes his book as trying to trace a natural development of life towards a common consciousness and common will. "Common consciousness" and "common will" are not such clear terms as Wells seems to suppose. The main teaching of Jesus according to Wells is the doctrine of the Kingdom of Heaven, the universal Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of all mankind. Yet, apart from acknowledging that Jesus said his kingdom was not of this world, neither here nor elsewhere does Wells recognise the existence and power of the conviction, widely held in history, that this life is a mere fragment, a forecourt of preparation not for the earthly life of the future members of the race, but for a non-earthly continuance of each individual.

Not only does Wells drop out all consideration of what God meant for Jesus, he even goes so far as definitely to suggest that religion is itself simply the ethical attitude of universal brotherhood and self-sacrifice. Though he has himself mentioned the supernatural sort of interpretation, he fails to recognise that in that lies the source of the real problems sometimes described as the conflict of science and religion. It is no solution simply to discard the supernatural interpretation, and those who admit its possibility and are aware of the ultimate problems of knowledge and existence implied are not necessarily "foolish," whether they

accept or reject that interpretation. It is, however, an advantage to have Wells' naturalistic attitude clearly stated. "Though much has been written foolishly about the antagonism of science and religion, there is indeed no such antagonism. What all these world religions declare by inspiration and insight, history as it grows clearer and science as its range extends display, as a reasonable and demonstrable fact, that men form one universal brotherhood, that they spring from one common origin, that their individual lives, their nations and races, interbreed and blend and go on to emerge again at last in one common human destiny upon this little planet amidst the stars. And the psychologist can now stand beside the preacher and assure us that there is no reasoned peace of heart, no balance and safety in the soul until a man in losing his life has found it, and has schooled and disciplined his interests and will beyond greeds, rivalries, fears, instincts and narrow affections. The history of our race and personal religious experience run so closely parallel as to seem to a modern observer almost the same thing ; both tell of a being at first scattered and blind and utterly confused, feeling its way slowly to the serenity and salvation of an ordered and coherent purpose. That, in the simplest, is the outline of history : whether we have a religious purpose or disavow a religious purpose altogether, the lines of the outline remain the same." In spite, therefore, of all he has said of the Invisible

King, this Captain of mankind is not in any way to be seen as evident in the "warfare" which constitutes human history. All Wells gives us is again simply a socially humanistic view of certain aspects of the evolution of man.

It has been seen that the fundamental conception for Hardy is the vast Cosmic Will, and for Shaw the Universal Life-Force. Chesterton leads us finally to the mystery of the Trinity. Even Wells, who acknowledges an experience of God but gives Him no evident part in human history, is also prepared to accept the notion of an ultimate "Veiled Being," although he ascribes to It no definite significance for human life. Thus, in spite of the opposite impression made by the far greater part of Wells' work, in all these writers there is a transcendence of the view-point of positivism: there is something which justifies the assertion of an element of mysticism in their attitudes.

Sometimes this tendency towards mysticism in contemporary British thought receives striking and unexpected expression. The instance of *John Middleton Murry*¹ is of distinct interest not merely in itself, but also for an understanding of this real though somewhat hidden factor in current British mental life. In 1920 he wrote: "After all we may say bravely, these years of war have shattered

¹ *The Evolution of an Intellectual*. London, 1920.

To the Unknown God: Essays towards a Religion. London, 1924.

our illusions. We may not be, we certainly are not, happy as we once were; we do not know what we believe, and we do not care to look into the matter for fear that we should find in the recesses something which we do not care to look upon, much less own as ours. But still, though we do not believe in life as we once did, life takes care of itself." Such a sense of disillusion, of dissatisfaction with "life," was probably a necessary antecedent to his later advance. There are not a few in our day who are at this stage, though they resist confessing it to themselves. It is one of the sure signs that in many ways we are definitely in a transition period, discontented with the old yet not yet in secure possession of the new.

Even in 1920 Murry was aware that the "leaven of a religious sense is at work in the world," though it did not know how to express itself. In 1924, however, he tried to express his own deepest convictions. In reply to a science student who bemoans that life is meaningless and incomprehensible, Murry tells of his experience after the death of his wife—of his loneliness, of his becoming aware of his own inner being. "It was I, as I had never been before, and never should be again. . . . A moment came when the darkness of that ocean changed to light, the cold to warmth; when it swept in one great wave over the shores and frontiers of my self; when it bathed me and I was renewed; when the room was filled with a presence

and I knew that I was not alone—that I never could be alone any more ; that the universe beyond held no menace, for I was part of it ; that in some way that I had sought in vain so many years, I belonged to it, and because I belonged, I was no longer I, but something different, which could never be afraid of the old ways or cowardly with the old cowardice. And the love I had lost was still mine, but now more durable, being knit into the very substance of the universe I had feared." So, eventually, he has learned that the highest knowledge, " the truest, the most permanent," is not rational nor irrational ; " it is just knowledge." In other words, in true knowledge one reaches an ultimate ; and the same is true of the essence of the religious attitude.

It is significant of British mentality that, considering the vastness of the number of books for the general reader which come from the press each year in Britain, comparatively few concern themselves with the more profound problems of existence. Questions of social organisation and of biographical, historical and political interest with purely mundane reference are more popular subjects of discussion. Some of those who might write with a strong literary appeal and considerable influence are too keenly aware of the need for these ultimate problems to be treated systematically with the methods of science and philosophy, and for such a treatment they know themselves insufficiently equipped. Thus it is that British thought on the significance of life

and existence finds its almost sole expression in the utterances of divines and of leaders of science and philosophy. However impressive the thoughts and the style of writers such as those considered in the preceding pages, the question inevitably arises as to whether science and philosophy confirm the ideas which they present for acceptance. Sooner or later it comes to be recognised that for judgement as to the truth or falsity of their contentions appeal must be made to those whose life work is not so much to impress the public mind as simply to seek the truth.

CHAPTER II

NATURALISM

THE triumphs of human thought are nowhere more generally apparent than in the results of its inquiries into the constitution and processes of physical Nature. These results impress themselves upon even the less reflective by the manner in which they have been used in the amelioration of the conditions of human life and in the extension of the scope for enjoyment. This, in itself, makes quite intelligible the confidence which is widely felt in what in many minds is alone accorded the name of "Science." That confidence in part depends also upon the belief that the scientist is indubitably concerning himself with facts, while it is considered at least open to doubt that such is the case with thought which does not come under this appellation. Intellectual life in Britain to-day is in no small degree affected by such confidence.

Such an attitude is largely justified by the honourable place occupied by British thinkers in the past history of Natural Science. Occasionally the opinion is expressed that at the present time there are in Britain no scientists of the eminence of those of the past. That view is most probably incorrect, depend-

ing upon a failure to appreciate the difference between our own and earlier conditions. Although their number is still not large, there are to-day so many more scholars of eminence in particular regions of investigation compared with even fifty years ago that attention is rarely centred for long preponderantly upon any individual. Another fact which leads to under-estimation by the indiscriminating, is that, however wide his interests and his knowledge, the contemporary scientist rarely ventures to adopt openly an attitude as of authority regarding the whole realm of Natural Science. This is an age not merely of specialism, but also of specialists willing, even anxious, to treat themselves merely as such. Unjustifiable dogmatism with reference to fields of knowledge other than their own has become less frequent. That is an undoubted advance. There is, however, a tendency to such occupation in their own spheres of research that many scientists are apparently losing real interest in and attention to other issues beyond those spheres. While the extent of scientific research and the intensity of scientific thought are to-day far greater than ever before in Britain, there is apparently among Natural Scientists proportionately less discussion of the wider problems of life and reality.

If, in spite of appearances, interest in these problems is actually just as widespread as formerly, it is not so conspicuous, mainly because controversy is carried on now without the violence of bigotry.

The rejection of traditional religious beliefs by scientists is no longer represented by the protagonists of religion as due to a special form of moral turpitude. Leaders of religion are rarely looked upon now by scientists as impostors turning men from beneficial truths of science to baneful superstitions. The impression of sharp conflicts, the sense of urgency in coming to a conclusion concerning the matters in dispute, which seem to have been felt in a not very remote past, are not characteristic of the present. Consequently there are no very definitely marked divisions among modern British scientists as to the most acceptable conceptions of the great issues of life. It is quite impossible to find any reliable evidence to substantiate any significant statements as to the views which preponderate amongst them. Only this is sure: there is a distinct attitude of reserve: there is an avoidance of dogmatism. It does not seem correct to speak as though there are any specific movements of philosophical or theological thought which find their adherents largely among Natural Scientists. Not only is it impossible to affirm with any certainty that there is a predominant attitude of agnosticism or of Naturalism towards ultimate problems: even a suggestion of the dominance of such an attitude is extremely doubtful.

In the past among non-British students of British thought the view has been widely, even generally held, that it is essentially and radically empirical. That view, which has become modified as foreign

historians of philosophy have made a closer and more detailed study of the relevant facts, still continues as a vague impression. It is still frequently held as a true representation of the dominant British attitude by thinkers of the East. But the term "empirical" is notoriously ambiguous, and in this ambiguity lies both the truth and the falsity of the view. Both European and Oriental thinkers have taken a narrow and so far inadequate and inaccurate interpretation of British empiricism. Together with the view that British activities in physical science, in industry and in commerce are the expression of a predominantly materialistic type of life, it has been held that British empiricism signifies that the only possible knowledge is through the senses, with the use of physical sense organs.

In spite of the error of this view, it must be admitted and insisted that British thought has been and is mainly empirical. It has rarely started from the implications of formal thought, but it has acknowledged at the outset the data of experience in all its varied character, and it has come back to such experience in order to test the validity of its conclusions. There has, however, been some justification for the non-British view above mentioned, in that a few eminent thinkers have tended to express themselves as though all knowledge is based on the experience of the senses. The movement of British thought as a whole has consisted largely in a conflict or a series of conflicts between those

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who have maintained this narrow view of experience and those who have insisted on experience in its widest possible signification, implying more than is apparent by means of the physical senses. This fundamental conflict has determined the character of British thought in the past: it constitutes an underlying current in British thought in the present.

The philosophical method of David Hume is a double-edged critique: it is as effective against dogmatisms of Natural Scientists as against those of theologians. For Hume himself there was probably something ironical in many of his utterances, but this does not seem to have been recognised by adherents to the school of thought associated with Thomas Henry Huxley. They could accept as literally meant, Hume's statement, "If we take in hand any volume of divinity, or school metaphysics, for instance, let us ask, Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity and number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames, for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion." It was with an attitude such as is implied on the surface of this statement, and taking "experimental reasoning concerning matters of fact and existence" in the sense of the physical, that there grew up in the nineteenth century in Britain a form of narrow empiricism to which was given the name of Naturalism.

Huxley and Herbert Spencer, who were looked up to as leaders by those of naturalistic persuasion, were themselves too penetrative and too broad-minded to be entirely satisfied with such a view. They at least acknowledged difficulties, but being unable either to meet them themselves or to accept the solutions proposed by their philosophical and theological opponents, they assumed an attitude of agnosticism. Ostensibly an avowal of ignorance and of suspension of judgement, this turned out to be practically a capitulation to the narrower point of view. Opposition to Naturalism has formed a considerable part of the philosophical movements of the last half-century. In the earlier part of that period the arguments used by the leaders of religion on behalf of a more profound and a wider view of life and reality were piecemeal and ineffective. A greater influence began to make itself felt in the present century in dissatisfaction with Naturalism within the ranks of scientists themselves. Thus, George John Romanes, who in his *Candid Examination of Theism* had strenuously opposed Theism and maintained a naturalistic and agnostic attitude, came to recognise the limitations of that position and prepared notes for a book¹ to urge the claims of religion. So again, Alfred Russel Wallace felt the necessity of admitting some kind of guidance, at least in the great turning-points of evolution—

¹ Published posthumously as *Thoughts on Religion*, edited by Charles Gore, 1904.

guidance other than human, yet analogous to that seen in the rational action of selection by men in raising new and improved stocks of animals and plants. These are but two examples, but within scientific circles aggressive Naturalism has been tempered by an increasing awareness of the nature of scientific problems themselves. From this has resulted that attitude of reserve already noted.

It is, however, significant that contemporary British thought has among the representatives of Natural Science a thinker of great popular influence who, going beyond this attitude of reserve champions a positive interpretation of Christianity "allied with science." *Oliver Lodge*¹ has achieved his scientific eminence in a region of physics which in its results as applied in wireless telephony has greatly impressed the modern mind. His consideration of particular Christian doctrines has also led to a widespread interest in his writings owing to their close association with the felt problems of contemporary religion. During the past twenty years he has published a

¹ *Life and Matter* : an Exposition of part of the Philosophy of Science. London, 1906.

The Substance of Faith allied with Science : a Catechism for Parents and Teachers. London, 1907.

Man and the Universe : a Study of the Influence of the advance in Scientific Knowledge upon our Understanding of Christianity. London, 1909.

Reason and Belief. London, 1910.

The Survival of Man : a Study of Unrecognised Human Faculty. London, 1909.

number of books, most of which have had a very wide circulation. Whatever the judgement of scholars as to his views—and it is from many sides adversely critical—he is probably the most widely read of modern British scientists amongst “general” readers. Both in their tone and in the character of many of the detailed discussions his books manifest their author’s strong emotional and practical sympathies with Christianity otherwise than in an intellectual interpretation of its doctrines.

In accordance and sympathy with the attitude now prevalent among British scientists, Lodge disavows all dogmatism. He even goes further and definitely asserts that we have no access to infallible information concerning matters of fact. Nevertheless, somehow, though the manner is not explained, he holds that human knowledge is true as far as it goes, though the whole of truth is unattainable by us. In all knowledge new ideas arise first as a kind of inspiration: this holds of hypotheses in science no less than of ideas in religion.

Science, he contends, has nothing whatever to do with the question of ultimate origins. Science starts simply with matter in motion and endeavours to trace something of its past and to suggest something of its possible or probable future. The important question for the understanding of what is here meant by science would seem, therefore, to depend upon what is meant by “matter in motion.” It will be observed that with regard to this there is a veiled

agnosticism in Lodge's works. "Matter is known to us by our sensations, but it is not dependent upon them, nor is its nature the least like them." What then is its nature? If this is not known, it may justifiably be asked upon what grounds one may thus dogmatically affirm that it is not as it is known "by our sensations." All that the statement amounts to is that our sensations imply some kind of existence as their cause. Lodge does not regard it as possible definitely to affirm that any specific "material property" is genuinely constant. Instead, therefore, of talking of the conservation of matter, he would prefer to say that the *basis* of matter is fundamentally conserved. What the character of this *basis* is he is unable to describe. An interpretation in terms of such an "unknown" is not likely to carry us far. The position is similar with regard to life: "to the question what life is, we have yet no answer." We are not enlightened as to the kind of answer desired, and thus cannot be assured as to the true significance of the question.

From Lodge's point of view the most important thing about matter is that it is "the instrument and vehicle of mind." There are two things which especially impress him about life. It appears to have no law of conservation or constancy such as is predicted of matter. It manifests guidance, and guidance implies mind. The material constituents of a living being are "organised," they have a definite specific relation to one matter, and though

the actual materials change in the process of life, the forms of the parts and of the whole remain in essentials unchanged. That therefore which organises these varying materials in a persisting form must be as real as they are. This reality is the soul.

With the admission of the reality of guidance, as exemplified in the continued organisation of changing material in a living organism, the question suggests itself as to whether the variations in the process of evolution arise by guidance or by chance. Lodge tends to the conclusion that "future events are planned and are not haphazard and unseen." Applied thus to Nature beyond the particular purposive activity of man, guidance necessarily implies some superhuman power or powers. To the highest power the name God is accorded. It might have been supposed that an argument would have been developed along lines parallel to that of the preceding paragraph to the idea of God as the organising soul of the universe. The term God is, however, used in a number of ways with doubtful consistency. In the main it seems to be used "for a mode of regarding the Universe as invested with what in human beings we call personality, consciousness, and other forms of intelligence, emotion and will." The knowledge of religion, and so the knowledge of God, is different in kind from that of science. Though all men may in some degree obtain it directly, the knowledge of God comes

chiefly through "the saints and pinnacles of the race." Thus Lodge associates his teaching with that of Christianity, maintaining that God was especially manifested to men as good and loving in the life of Jesus Christ as understood by Christians. But it is impossible to understand how any such view of God is to be identified with "a mode of regarding the Universe."

Man has evolved, under divine guidance, from lower forms of life. Among his distinctive features are his capacity to differentiate between good and evil, and to feel responsibility for his conduct. Sin is the deliberate and wilful act of a free agent who sees the better and chooses the worse. But Lodge insists that evil should be looked at from the standpoint of evolution. Evil is then seen to be relative: it is the persistence or reflection of features of a less advanced stage into a more advanced stage. It is a relapse to a lower level of evolution: choosing a course of action of a type already transcended.

It must not be supposed that Lodge's sympathetic attitude to Christianity implies an acceptance of the prevalent orthodoxy. For although, with insistence on the conception of the Incarnation as suggesting a union of the divine and the human, there is also talk of the "divinity of Jesus," it is accompanied by the parenthesis, "and of all other noble and saintly souls in so far as they too can be recognised as manifestations of the Divine." The belief in the Virgin Birth of Jesus as the Son of God in the sense

usually meant is "materialism rampant." So with regard to the doctrine of the Resurrection: to link the Christian faith "inextricably with an anatomical statement about flesh and bones is rash." And if God is "a mode of regarding the Universe," it does not seem that Lodge can consistently hold what he calls the "most essential element in Christianity," "its conception of a human God."

Another scientist convinced that experience is wider and more significant than can be expressed within the limits of the Natural Sciences has also considerable influence amongst general readers. Revealing his genuine interest in the problems of the relations of religion and science, *John Arthur Thomson's*¹ books are free of any attempt, such as that of Lodge, to interpret peculiarly Christian doctrines. They manifest more of the attitude of reserve and a desire to keep more to a consideration of what the facts of Nature suggest. His more distinctly scientific approach and his less particularist aims have gained for him a sounder appreciation.

Thomson is keenly aware of the difficult problems which may be raised as to the character and status of our so-called knowledge of Nature, especially as systematised in the Natural Sciences. In agreement with many other contemporary scientists, he main-

¹ *System of Animate Nature*. Gifford Lectures. London, 1920.
What is Man? London, 1923.

Science and Religion. London, 1925. And many other works.

tains that science is descriptive, but not interpretative. It is concerned with the "What?" not with the ultimate "Why?" of things. The method of science is observation aided by experiment. Nature, being known only in the mirror of our minds, our knowledge is conditioned by the limitations of our senses: in consequence it is partial and abstract. The so-called Laws of Nature are short descriptive formulas summing up our experience of the course of events. To call science descriptive must not be regarded as derogatory, for the possibility of some amount of correct prediction with the aid of these formulas shows that they bear a close relation with actualities. Science admits irreducibles. At present in physics the irreducibles, or perhaps one ought rather to say the "irreduced," are electrons and protons; in biology life, organism, protoplasm, cell. All these have to be accepted as such. Science cannot penetrate to beginnings nor does it inquire into meanings or ultimate purposes.

In its accounts of the historical process of evolution, science has to acknowledge new stages which it cannot show to be the mere resultant of the past. The uniformity of the inorganic world, which in itself seems to have no freedom of action and no purposiveness, nothing like learning in the school of time, is nevertheless probably indispensable as a basis, not only for the superstructure of life, but also for the exercise of human will. Even the humblest living organisms seem to have something

creative in their mutations, essential features, indescribable by merely mechanical conceptions. They have effective behaviour: they are variable; and their experience is in some way registered in their nature. In the realm of living beings absolute determinism is not found, but there are signs both of determinism and of freedom. This might, perhaps, be better expressed by saying that there is freedom within limits. Much of the time and energy of organisms is concerned with activities not only for individual self-maintenance, but also for the continuance and welfare of the race.

There is probably much of which we have no direct knowledge through the senses: "below the invisibility of the ponderables there is a deeper invisibility of the imponderables—thoughts and feelings and the bent bow of purpose." After all, contends Thomson, "matter" and "mind" are both abstract aspects of reality. Mind gradually emerges from unrecognisable implicitness in the individual, and there is an increasing expression of it in the realm of organisms. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to hold that throughout the universe there is something analogous to mind in man. In other words, there is nothing merely physical. With this suggestion we are almost beyond what science can tell us. For "the investigations of science lead us to recognise an immanent order in the world. There is unity, simplicity, continuity, and a kind of progressiveness. There science stops."

Science does, however, tend to confirm the aspirations of man, in that it reveals in the long-drawn-out process of evolution a persistent urge which is, on the whole, in a progressive direction. "As age has succeeded age, there has been an emergence of finer, more masterful, more emancipated forms of life." There has been a trend towards the increasing dominance of mind, a consistent advance towards personality. It is important to give due recognition to the part which non-human Nature has had in the evolution of the human spirit. "Its enigmas have educated our intelligence; its practical problems have trained our will; and in the animate in particular man has found a school of feeling." Although there have been phases of disintegration, the process has been predominantly towards integration and towards higher values. "It may be said that man is the outcome of a persistent trend—towards freedom of mind—which has been characteristic of the process of organic evolution for millions of years." "What the evolution process points to with firmness is that brains pay—brains that include love as well as logic." Thomson also maintains that the realm of living organisms is pervaded with beauty. Beauty is "Nature's stamp of approval on harmonious viable individuality." The processes of Nature tend to eliminate ugliness. In the lower stages of biological advance, bi-sexual reproduction has been very beneficial; in the higher stages sex

dimorphism has been a "basis for love, becoming a liberator and an educator of emotions," enriching and ennobling the lives of many creatures.

If now we endeavour to find the meaning and the purpose of the cosmic process, bearing in mind those aspects which Thomson brings into relief, we are, he thinks, led towards a Theistic position. The truths of science cannot be made the premises for an argument for the belief in the existence of God, which is a conclusion too great for such premises. But Thomson insists that the method of religion differs from that of science. In religion we do not reach the Theistic position by thinking of the sum-total of the energies of the universe, or of a concept including in addition our values and ideals. Like science, religion admits ultimates, facts which cannot be described in simpler terms. The facts of history are sufficient to allow us to reject the view that religion is merely an illusion. "The vision of God," with which religion is concerned, differs from the knowledge of science in that it is transcendental and mystical. God is spiritual, and as spiritual must be spiritually discerned. This is the reality upon which fasten the tendrils sent out in religion. For religion is not a mere projection of the best that is in us, it is also an opening "of our hearts to the best that is outside of us."

A much more detached attitude is assumed by

*Ernest William Hobson*¹ in his Gifford Lectures on *The Domain of Natural Science*, in which he considers in detail the general character of Natural Science, as well as the nature of the problems, the scope and the methods of its particular branches. All these he shows to be definitely limited. "Natural science postulates as a working hypothesis only that the perceptual complex is such that tracts of it are capable of conceptual description by scientific schemes. It does not require any postulate as to detailed systems of relations or of entities within that perceptual complex, or within any supposed reality behind that complex, which shall account for the fact that the working hypothesis has proved successful." While on the one hand he maintains that thus religious and philosophical thought is free from any fear of destructive interference from the side of Natural Science, on the other he believes that the order or uniformity in Nature may be considered as forming part of the basis for a possible Theistic philosophy.

Other leading scientists from their own special standpoints have expressed views of importance bearing on ultimate problems, though only a few can be referred to here. Thus, the late *William Bateson*² in his Presidential Address to the British

¹ *The Domain of Natural Science*. Gifford Lectures. Cambridge, 1923.

² Report of the Proceedings of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1914.

Association in 1914, maintained that in the realm of biology "we must confess to a deep but irksome humility in presence of great vital problems. Every theory of evolution must be such as to accord with the facts of physics and chemistry, a primary necessity to which our predecessors paid small heed, . . . Of the physics and chemistry of life we know next to nothing. Somehow the characters of living things are bound up in the properties of colloids, and largely determined by the chemical powers of enzymes, but the study of these classes of matter has only just begun. Living things are found by a simple experiment to have powers undreamt of, and who knows what may be behind?"

So, again, *Charles Scott Sherrington*,¹ in his Presidential Address to the same Association in 1922, while insisting on the extent to which mechanism prevails in animal organisation, contended that, "turning to other aspects of animal mechanism such as the shaping of the animal body, the conspiring of its structural units to compass later functional ends, the predetermination of specific growth from egg to adult, the predetermined natural term of existence, these, and their intimate mechanism, we are, it seems to me, despite many brilliant inquiries and inquirers, still at a loss to understand." More important than this admission of our ignorance is his

¹ Report of the Proceedings of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. London, 1922.

grasp of the essential character of a problem which is inevitably involved. He maintains that the living creature is fundamentally a unity. "It is as a whole, a single entity, that the animal, or for that matter the plant, has finally and essentially to be envisaged. We cannot really understand its one part without its other. Can we suppose a unified entity which is part mechanism and part not?" While giving no answer to his own question, he says it is one of the privileges of the human intellect "to attempt to comprehend, not leaving out of account any of its properties, the how of the living creature as a whole."

It appears as though *Frederick Soddy*¹ is prepared to regard this unity as the ultimate mystery of life. His exposition suggests an apparently insoluble dualism. He asserts that for science the universe is eternal: neither matter nor energy can be created. Science "has banished the conception of deity for ever from the working of the inanimate world." This world "behaves in all respects as, and therefore is, a simple machine left to go." But, on the other hand, he says: "I accept the, to my mind, complete break of continuity between the animate and the inanimate worlds, as being all that is really demanded of our present knowledge." The mystery of life is in the combination in a single self-contained organism of intelligent guidance and what, "for

¹ *Science and Life*. London, 1920.

present purposes, has to be considered a perfectly understandable machine." For "the real part of a man is not his bodily organism, which is continually wasting away and being as continually renewed, nor the physical energy at its command, which is derived entirely from the inanimate world, but is the personality resident in the body and in control of it." "There is no other interpretation of the difference between a man alive one moment and dead the next, which, in spite of the great advances in the interpretation of the mechanism of life made by biology, altogether eludes apprehension in terms of the other fundamental conceptions to which our inquiries into ourselves and our environment have led."

The position is stated in another manner by *William McDougall*¹ in an address at the British Association meeting in 1924. He is less inclined to accord such importance to mechanism. "In physiology the mechanistic confidence of the nineteenth century is fading away, as the complexity of the living organism is more fully realised, as its powers of compensation, self-regulation, reproduction and repair are more fully explained." "In general biology the mechanistic Neo-Darwinism is bankrupt before the problems of evolution, the origin of variations and mutations, the differentiation

¹ Report of the Proceedings of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1924, p. 230.

and specialisation of instincts, the increasing rôle of intelligent adaptation, the predominance of mind in the later stages of evolutionary process, the indications or purposive striving at even the lowest levels, the combinations of marvellous persistency of type with indefinite plasticity which pervades the realm of life, and which finds its only analogue in the steadfast, purposive, adaptive striving of a resolute personality."

With the limitations of specialism and the attitude of reserve among scientists ; with the suggestion of a wider view by Russel Wallace and Romanes ; with the attempts to indicate the character of such a view in some detail by Thomson and by Lodge, the impression has been gaining ground that any general view which might assume or rightly be given the name of Naturalism is once for all superseded. The accuracy of this impression is open to doubt, is, indeed, definitely challenged. For within recent times two British thinkers have published works which, though indicating marked advances, are nevertheless in direct line with the earlier Naturalism associated with the name of Thomas Henry Huxley. It is of more than historic interest that these two thinkers are closely related with Huxley. Conwy Lloyd Morgan is probably the most distinguished of his pupils ; Julian Huxley is his grandson. The former definitely adopts the term Naturalism for his attitude, and it may not unjustly be applied also to

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that of the latter, not only from the character of his exposition but also from his talk of the "banishment of the supernatural."

Few, if indeed any other modern British scientists, have had the many-sided training and acquired the wealth of scientific knowledge that *Lloyd Morgan*¹ has. He is one of the few who are not simply specialists in one region of research. As a mineralogist, as a biologist, and as a psychologist he has shown his efficiency in the study of matter, of life and of mind. He has had almost a lifelong interest in the philosophical consideration of the nature of human knowledge, and as a Professor of Ethics he has investigated the problems of the values of human life. A mind so well equipped could not but present us with a scheme comprehensive in its conception and profound in its sympathies. His technical studies in the different fields of science need not be discussed here, since he has stated the general character of his scheme of thought in particular works, especially his courses of Gifford Lectures. In these, as in the earlier volume, *The Interpretation of Nature*, there is a definite endeavour to formulate for contemporary

¹ *The Interpretation of Nature*. Bristol, 1905. (The substance of Lowell Lectures.)

Herbert Spencer's Philosophy of Science. Oxford, 1913. (The Herbert Spencer Lecture.)

Emergent Evolution. Gifford Lectures. London, 1923.

Life, Mind and Spirit. Gifford Lectures. London, 1926.

thought a scheme of Naturalism. The naturalistic attitude may exist more commonly than is apparent among living British scientists, who, in accordance with the prevalent reserve, do not openly express it. But it is probable that if they did try to express it, their expositions would follow along lines similar to those of Lloyd Morgan. It will be seen that there is a marked similarity between the views of Julian Huxley and those of Lloyd Morgan.

"The naturalistic contention," says Lloyd Morgan, "is that, on the evidence, not only atoms and molecules, but organisms and minds, are susceptible of treatment by scientific methods fundamentally of like kind; that all belong to one tissue of events; that all exemplify one fundamental plan." It seems necessary to ask, What are these scientific methods? What is this one tissue of events? What is this one fundamental plan? If we find Lloyd Morgan's answers to these questions we shall see what he understands by Naturalism.

There is no clear statement as to what the scientific methods are. The one important contention is that, as the sciences are simply descriptive, so is Naturalism. The terms in which such description can be given are not, however, limited as they were supposed to be in the earlier Naturalism. In the Herbert Spencer Lecture, Lloyd Morgan points out that Spencer explicitly recognised the characteristics of living organisms, which cannot be conceived in physico-chemical terms, and he asks

whether Spencer fully realised that this broke into the purely mechanical interpretation of Nature he had championed. He charges Spencer also with having failed to bring the facts of cognition and the conscious awareness it involves into really close touch with the rest of his philosophy of science. Lloyd Morgan sees that Naturalism to be thoroughgoing must face the task of considering such cognition and conscious awareness "on lines similar to our treatment of other types of relatedness within one order of Nature." It may reasonably be asked whether this can be done. The answer to this question must depend upon what is meant by "similar to our treatment of other types of relatedness, etc." What this similarity can be is nowhere apparent, for it is of the very essence of Lloyd Morgan's method that the distinctive can be described only in its own terms. This will be seen in the course of the following account.

The "one tissue of events" may be supposed to be the happenings in space and time, or, otherwise, expressed, spatial and temporal happenings. The "one fundamental plan" is apparently the course of "emergent evolution," within which, according to Naturalism, all facts have their position. By evolution is meant an advance—in some sense of that term—from one level to another which may be called "higher" because (1) it involves the lower levels, and (2) it includes something new. The new characteristic at each stage is called an "emergent."

No emergent can be accounted for by consideration of the lower stages which preceded it, although it grows out of them—whatever that may mean. Each emergent is something more and something other than that from which it appears to come. There is no possibility of deducing or predicting the nature of the new from that of the old. No amount of reflection on the inorganic would lead to the idea of the organic. As no emergent can be predicted from, explained by, or accounted for by what goes before it in the course of evolution, each emergent has simply to be accepted as a fact and accorded its position in the scheme. Naturalism, as the theory of emergent evolution, is just a description of the character of each emergent.

As Naturalism holds that the higher stage cannot be explained as a simple product of the lower, so also it maintains that the lower cannot be explained in terms of the higher. If mind cannot be explained by life, neither can life be explained by mind. Naturalism accordingly accepts neither a materialistic explanation by reference to the physical, nor an idealistic one by reference to the mental. The new, the emergents, in the course of evolution, are "beyond the wit of man to number."

Such naturalistic description must necessarily have a lower limit, from which, as it were, evolution begins. With regard to this Lloyd Morgan says: "I can pierce no deeper than events which, in their primordial form are not only spatio-temporal, but

physical also." There are, however, many passages, in accordance with the general trend of the exposition, which suggest that that from which the description sets out is really psycho-physical. "Both attributes are inseparable in essence." Mind is said to be a universal correlate. But it may reasonably be objected that Lloyd Morgan does not make clear what the terms physical and psychical at this stage imply. Mind as a universal correlate is apparently so featureless that its significance may be doubted. Only when in the course of evolution mind appears as a particular emergent is it known to have those distinctive qualities which are experienced by us. Any part which, on this naturalistic scheme, it plays before that, is so indefinite as to be of little if any significance, as though lacking just those functions which constitute the importance of mind. In short, this Naturalism, although it formally asserts the existence of mind in all stages, indicates no function of it in the lower stages in any intelligible meaning of the term mind. This reading back, throughout the whole process, of psychical qualities, the character of which is left absolutely vague, is merely a methodological postulate. And if that is admitted, there is no convincing reason why the qualities of all emergents whatever should not similarly be read back. Evolution would then be only apparently a process of emergence of what is new: it would be a mere unfolding of what is already there *ab initio*. It may be urged, therefore,

that the naturalistic conception of the primordial reality is built up from abstractions from data of conscious experience. As the character neither of the physical nor of the psychical from which Naturalism starts its description, nor the difference between them, nor their relation, is clearly indicated, it must be maintained that so far, Naturalism is a description in terms the significance of which is undetermined and virtually unknown.

In the Spencer Lecture, Lloyd Morgan criticises Spencer's uses of the terms "force" and "cause," and as an alternative suggests the term "source." It may be asked whether this is not to rule out of the implication something that Spencer wished to acknowledge. In accordance with the same attitude we are told that "relatedness," which is a feature of reality, implying the inclusion of both terms and their relation, is an expression meant to exclude the concept of activity or agency from scientific interpretation. How it is possible to look upon "life" and "mind" as emergents, as Naturalism professes to, and not to acknowledge activity in them, *as such*, is incomprehensible. Activity appears to be of the very essence of "life" and "mind" as they emerge in the course of evolution. The term "emergent" itself is unintelligible without some implication of activity.

In spite of this naturalistic method, Lloyd Morgan eventually admits the reality of activity: he is "unable to see how one is able to explain all that

goes on from start to finish without it." But he refers to it as Activity with a capital A, acknowledging it as present throughout as something supplementing his naturalistic description. Either activity is or is not a fact or a series of facts. If it is, it should be acknowledged *when, where* and *as* it is found. There is no adequate justification for introducing the idea of it—otherwise out of consideration—as though one universal homogeneous occult something. What we seem compelled to admit is not Activity but activities. In similar manner the term "Life," used in Lloyd Morgan's exposition, suggests a quality or a form of relatedness as though permeating all that has reached a certain stage. But, as living organisms are many, it is more correct to say "lives" than Life when one is describing the constituents of reality. Again, the only manner in which the mental is known is as emergents which are "minds." If we followed the implication of this down to the lower limit, in accordance with the suggestion of Naturalism, we reach not a single vague, attenuated psychical attribute, but rather active *psyches* as effective terms in its relatedness. The resultant conception would then be very different from that of Naturalism as described by Lloyd Morgan.

Naturalism affirms that every higher stage of evolution involves the lower. Mind is a new kind of relatedness involving life, and this in turn the physiological organism, and this, again, certain physico-chemical qualities. The suggestion is that

mind cannot emerge without the presence of physico-chemical existents. Anyone seeking an understanding of human life will thus be led to ask : If mind is a new kind of relatedness involving life and the physiological organism with its physico-chemical characters, does *this* mind, as such and such relatedness, involving a particular organism, cease to exist when the organism disintegrates ? If so, the belief in personal immortality must be discarded. Then an interesting problem for Naturalism might be raised concerning the emergence of the idea of immortality. If the mind does not cease to exist, we seem left with three possibilities : (1) it continues without any relation to a physiological organism ; but this is opposed to the view above described ; or (2) it is somehow transferred into a new relatedness (as by re-incarnation, transmigration) : but for this there is no evidence ; or (3) it continues as an eternal part of one eternally Universal Mind ; then the resultant view is like the Indian forms of singularism. Leaving this aside, two other questions must certainly be asked of Naturalism : Are we to regard it as in accord with Naturalism that at least probably all organisms on earth will so disintegrate ? On such a view what does emergent evolution lead to for the human individual and for the race ? To this " problem of life and religion," Naturalism as represented by Lloyd Morgan suggests only a very unsatisfactory answer.

" Naturalism," wrote Lloyd Morgan in his earlier

work, "fails fully to satisfy the needs of the inquiring human mind." Its task is finished in tracing antecedent conditions of any product of Nature. Man, however, looks not merely backward but forward. Conduct and history lose their meaning if "we rule out purpose and end and the desire for attainment from the real causes of man's endeavour." But surely these ought on the "naturalistic contention" to be "susceptible of treatment by scientific methods," and "exemplify one fundamental plan." If such methods and this plan are not conceived as wide enough to include these, then Naturalism stands self-condemned as inadequate to the facts, the whole of which it nevertheless claims to include in its purview.

In the Gifford Lectures Naturalism seems again to be presented as inadequate. Apparently from the necessity of recognising religion as significant in experience, Lloyd Morgan urges that Naturalism may be supplemented by the acknowledgement of God. "I acknowledge a physical world which I admit is beyond proof. I acknowledge also God, who is, I contend, beyond disproof." And he goes on to remark: "so far as I can judge both acknowledgements work." But what is there in the series of emergents as experienced to lead us to go beyond them to this further acknowledgement? Lloyd Morgan has not yet indicated how psychical experiences within the naturalistic scheme may thus lead beyond it.

God is Spirit, and Spirit we are told is different from and other than mind. Nevertheless mind is able to assert that Spirit is not an emergent. Though Spirit is somehow related to the whole course of emergent evolution, this Naturalism with its supplement represents a divorce between the science of the body and the mind, and the knowledge of what is here called Spirit. Naturalism thus shirks some of the great problems of metaphysics and of religion. The character and status of Spirit in the individual human person, or the human person as spirit (if such can be affirmed), is quite undecided. It is open to very great doubt whether the human individual has any significance beyond his temporary appearance in the series of events in the course of emergent evolution. And even with regard to the accounts of this evolution there is in effect a divorce between the general description of emergents in universal terms and the recognition of the particular realities as oriented in space and time and related to the attainment of particular values which constitutes the actual historical evolution. Throughout Lloyd Morgan's exposition one cannot get free from the impression that we are presented with the hypostatizing of a conceptual scheme.

Something of the interest and significance of the work of *Julian Huxley* in a consideration of contemporary British thought lies in the fact that he is just over the threshold of middle age. Notwith-

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standing its great advance, Lloyd Morgan's exposition of Naturalism might almost be regarded as a culmination of the naturalistic school of Thomas Henry Huxley. That of Julian Huxley may turn out to be the forerunner of a series of naturalistic works by a new school of younger men. It must be confessed that there are at present no clear signs of any such movement, but the attitude of reserve and mere specialism among scientists can hardly be regarded as entirely satisfactory and may at any moment be given up for attempts to formulate more general conceptions in relation with the wider problems of existence. It will be in the highest degree surprising if some of these do not take the direction and assume the form of Naturalism.

The views of Julian Huxley considered here were expounded by him in a volume¹ of essays published in the same year as Lloyd Morgan's first course of Gifford Lectures. Impressed with the scientific evidence of the fundamental uniformity and unity of the cosmos, like Lloyd Morgan he believes that it is possible to-day to link up the whole realm of the sciences, physics, geology, chemistry, biology, anthropology and psychology, and to view them as a coherent and organised whole. The apparent unity of phenomena of the living and the non-living leads him to insist on a monistic conception of reality, by which he means that there is only one substance. To this he gives the name

¹ *Essays of a Biologist*. London, 1923.

of "world-stuff," and contends that it has not only material properties but also others for which the word "mental is the nearest approach." Thus it is held, for no very clear reasons, that not living matter alone, but all matter, is associated with something of the same kind as mind in higher animals. For this view of Naturalism, as for Lloyd Morgan's, the whole is psycho-physical.

Julian Huxley is impressed by the fundamental need of man for a sure basis for confidence and hope. As the "only actual source of knowledge" is through the study of Nature, including man, he inquires whether this can provide us with a basis. It is worth while noting here that there is something ambiguous in this reference to "man," since all, whether advocates of Naturalism or of any of the opposing views, must insist that all knowledge for men comes to or through men. This applies to knowledge of the so-called "super-natural," if any, just as much as to knowledge of Nature. Yet Huxley wishes unquestionably to suggest a view of man from which all idea of possibility of knowledge of a supernatural is rejected. In this his thought conforms with traditional Naturalism. He is, however, convinced that the sure basis for confidence and hope exists in the teachings of science concerning the character and the course of actual evolution. For a survey of the leading conclusions of the scientific examination of various kinds of facts shows that there has been "a main direction in

evolution." Much of his exposition is concerned with a statement of the most significant of these facts. It is important to review this statement in relation to his main principles.

The processes in the inorganic made the organic possible. Thence, in his own words: "During the course of evolution in time there has been an increase in the control exerted by organisms over their environment and in their independence with regard to it; there has been an increase in the harmony of the parts of organisms; there has been an increase of psychical powers of organisms, an increase of willing, of feeling and of knowing." Nevertheless, we are told that before the emergence of conscious purpose, all was the "work of blind unconscious forces." Yet, according to the general account of the "world-stuff," there is a "psychical" character throughout the whole. If this is "blind" until the emergence of conscious purpose, the significance of the psychical up to that level is virtually nil. The description of Naturalism thus far would have little more to commend it than materialism. If man is to find "confidence and hope" in the course of evolution, he must consider it singularly fortunate that the work of these "blind unconscious forces" has made the higher stages possible. How this has occurred must seem even more remarkable when it is recognised that in the inorganic there is no evidence of any process which, as Natural Selection in the organic sphere, eliminates

discordant or less coherent forms. That "blind unconscious forces" of the inorganic have alone made the organic possible, is to many much more difficult to believe than any view which makes the psychical concomitant in all existence a genuine mental reality with the functions of intelligence and will, not blind and unconscious.

It is biology which, according to Julian Huxley, clarifies and puts on a "firm intellectual footing" the feeling or conviction that, though through conflict, the working of the whole tends to good. Whatever the extent of loss through decay and degeneration, he maintains that there has always been some fraction of progressive advance so that the level of the whole has risen in some way. With the eventual rise of conscious purpose progress has been able to become more rapid. In the recognition of this fact he thinks he sees an answer to a particular difficulty generally felt with regard to certain of his grandfather's views. Thomas Henry Huxley had insisted that in his moral life man is in some measure in conflict with Nature. This, says Julian Huxley, is not due to radical self-contradiction in Nature itself or of Nature with something of another order, but simply to differences of higher and more progressive stages and methods from the less progressive. From his description it seems that actually this is mainly between the consciously purposive and the unconscious. The earlier and slower forms become a drag on those of conscious

activity, and yet, strangely enough, we are asked to suppose that it is just the former which have led on to conscious purpose.

The course of evolution has led to an increase in the qualities which we call valuable and in their intensity. There is an increase in the power of bringing past experience to bear on present problems. There has been an increase in the degree of self-regulation, and, though with less dependence on external changes, more harmony of the parts and more unity in the whole. Seeing that according to Naturalism both are products of the same Nature, it is not very surprising that the "application of our scale of values tends in the same direction as the march of evolutionary history." For it may be supposed that if our scale of values were inverted and the course of evolution reversed, that course would be called progressive. Huxley's argument has too much the appearance of the type of plea of a drunken man to be judged good, taking his own condition of intoxication as his own standard of judgement.

Science does not justify an idea of inevitable or universal progress. Nevertheless, Julian Huxley maintains that there is sanction for the hope that by the rise of mind "we shall gradually learn to dispense with much waste and evil and degeneration in the further course of evolution." The fact of progress which is established by consideration of biological evolution is to be considered an intellectual

prop for confidence; but to what end? A future golden age is declared to be as impossible as one in the past. But it may well be asked: What is the content of the idea of a golden age, and whence is it derived? If the golden age is not and has not been, the concept of it has not been obtained as such from what is or has been. Even if the constituents of the idea are derived from our knowledge of the existing or what has existed, the form of their relation together is other. Then, how comes it that man's mind has so combined these constituents? And if man's mind can form a conception of a "future golden age," what justification has anyone for asserting the impossibility of reality evolving to such?

Even the "intellectual prop" for confidence and hope which we are offered depends on the faith that the future will be at least in the main consistent with that upward course of evolution which the biologist describes with reference to the past. How far confidence and hope may extend is clear neither for the individual human being nor for the race. The suggestion seems to be, that though there may be further increase in the attainment and enjoyment of what we call the valuable, there is to be a "final extinction of life." "It is probable that too great reductions of temperature or moisture on the surface of the earth would lead to a gradual reversal of progress before the final extinction of life. . . ." Seeing that temperature and moisture are resultants

of physico-chemical conditions, it seems as though the "end" of that evolution with which the biologist is concerned is to be under the sole sway of "blind unconscious forces." An eruption of a volcano may wipe out a town; a passing comet may at any moment shrivel up all living beings on the earth. The "intellectual prop" which biology supplies with its terrestrial outlook is indeed a very weak reed for the confidence and hope of man, when these are considered in their fullest range.

Contemporary Naturalism sincerely wishes to avoid the tendency to narrowness manifested by its precursors. In agreement with this wider outlook, Julian Huxley recognises the reasonableness of the demand for an understanding of religion. He insists that religion is a very important fact in human history. He states briefly what he considers to be the chief stages by which men's ideas of God or gods have grown up. He maintains that they are all forms of symbolism, due to the projection by man of features of his own conscious life beyond himself. A conception of God as personal is, he asserts, becoming untenable. Either such a God is the Universe, or is a ruler without power, a "mere fly on the wheel of the universe." No good ground is given for this assertion. With equal justification one might suggest that it is rather Julian Huxley who is like the fly on the wheel, with as yet a vision and an understanding too undeveloped to apprehend the Power at the hub.

CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT OF GREAT BRITAIN

The worship of God as absolute and as person has led men to absurdities of thought and of conduct ; to opposition to the results of the scientific study of Nature ; to obscurantism and to moral laziness. Nevertheless, continues Huxley, the term " God " has an important scientific connotation which ought to be made clear. The true character of religion is the reaction between man as personality and all the universe with which he comes in contact. The term " God " should be understood as connoting " the sum of the forces acting in the cosmos as perceived and grasped by the human mind." The universe is not God. But the idea of God implies the universe as grasped by a mind, and this idea influences this mind and through it the whole course of events. But our idea is incomplete, and " in this sense there is a God far greater than our present idea and knowledge of God, only waiting to be discovered." The external basis of the idea is constituted by forces operating in the universe. But the meaning of Huxley's statements as far as they refer to the relation of the idea of God to the universe is not at all clear.

This is not the place to inquire in detail as to how far, if at all, that idea could be accepted as satisfactory for human religion, though it is extremely doubtful that it could be so. Julian Huxley is prepared to admit an element of usefulness in the conception of God as personal, but he nevertheless regards this conception as due to the projection of

man's own nature on to what is beyond him. Against this it may be urged that actually the character of the reality worshipped in religion has been felt and conceived as having qualities so far different from those of the worshipper as to arouse his awe and reverence and supplication. Carried to its logical conclusion it would appear that in order to project a personality of the quality accepted as divine, the reality of such a personality would, on the theory of projection, have already in some way to exist in the projecting person. And this would itself be a being as real and qualitatively of the character of the personal deity the belief in which is asserted by Huxley to be untenable.

Many of the greatest experiences of human life, he eventually confesses, "in love, intellectual discovery, in art and in religion," have a sense of finality and utter reality. He would even admit that such satisfaction, "spiritual progress," is our ultimate aim, though insisting on its dependence on physical, intellectual and moral progress in the changing world of dated events. The question is whether this admission fully understood is compatible with Naturalism, or whether it does not involve an entirely different way of describing reality. This is what most of those who have rejected Naturalism contend; and to the consideration of the views of some of these we pass in the succeeding chapters.

CHAPTER III

ABSOLUTE IDEALISM

AT the beginning of the twentieth century, in one form or another, Idealism held rule in the philosophical circles of most British Universities. With its strongholds in the Universities of Oxford and Glasgow and championed by Thomas Hill Green and John and Edward Caird, for the previous half-century it had been getting itself more and more firmly established. At Cambridge the prevailing attitude was, as usual, distinctly critical, and as represented by Henry Sidgwick was one of non-committal. Otherwise with strong Idealistic sympathies, philosophical thought at Cambridge has developed on its own lines.

Extreme philosophical Idealism is not native to the British mind. The most noteworthy Idealism in Britain in earlier times, the Cambridge Platonism of More, Cudworth and Whichcote in the seventeenth century, derived its main doctrines from the school of Plato. Both in conception and in treatment there was much more originality in Berkeley's presentation of Idealism—but Berkeley was an Irishman. The Idealism which dominated so much

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of the academic philosophy of Britain in the nineteenth century and the early part of our present period received its chief impetus and its nourishment from Germany. In no small measure the interest in it was aroused by the work of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Thomas Carlyle, through which the main ideas passed into the wider currents of British thought. In philosophical circles it seemed the logical successor to the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, which had been hailed by the theologically inclined as a more thoroughgoing antidote to the scepticism of David Hume than the common-sense philosophy of the Scottish academics. Though the Idealism of Oxford and Glasgow developed a distinctive character of its own, it found its strongest support in the classical philosophy of Germany, especially that of G. F. W. Hegel.

Idealism has been most markedly developed in opposition to materialistic and naturalistic interpretations of existence. The Idealism of the Cambridge Platonists gained vigour largely by conflict with the materialistic philosophy of Thomas Hobbes. Bishop Berkeley had in view the theories which regarded matter as the fundamental reality. British Idealism of the latter part of the nineteenth century was in the first place a criticism of the naturalistic and agnostic attitudes which had become common as the result of an uncritical appreciation of the implications of advancing Natural Science. It came in part as a reaction to the popularity of the works

of Herbert Spencer and Thomas Henry Huxley. At the beginning of this century and during the period of contemporary thought it may, however, with good reason be said that Idealism came to be developed as a metaphysical system more or less independently of the aim of combatting non-spiritual theories. Within this period British Idealism seems to have reached its climax. Within it some of the most brilliant Idealist thinkers have lived and produced their most important works. Within it also the most prominent have died. Among living British thinkers there are no Idealists of anything like the same rank, and there appears no promise of any Idealist works of the same significance as those of the last half-century. But though Absolute Idealism counts for comparatively little in the thought of the immediate present, it has had a great part in the philosophical life of the period included in our survey of contemporary thought. Not a few living British thinkers still hold loosely to the Idealist position, aware of its weaknesses, unable to answer the prevailing criticisms, but nevertheless of opinion that opposing systems are still more unsatisfactory. Their own expositions are vague and hesitating, lacking, even disavowing the validity of, sharp distinctions. Contemporary British Absolute Idealists will not admit definite alternatives: the Absolute being all things to them, they in their turn wish to be philosophically "all things to all men." There is not the virile

confidence that was characteristic of the earlier thinkers, and there is an attitude of compromise.

Amongst modern British Absolutists none achieved greater eminence in the philosophical world than *Francis Herbert Bradley*.¹ Like Henry Jones and Bernard Bosanquet, he was influenced in early years by the works of Hermann Lotze, from whose mediating position they all reverted to a more thoroughgoing Absolutism. Bradley's philosophy reaches its truly classical exposition in *Appearance and Reality*, of which a competent judge has said that nothing greater has appeared since Kant. It is this work which must always be regarded as central in the study of Bradley. The earlier *Logic* is a guarded preliminary, which does not indicate what a thoroughgoing application of its principles in the direction of metaphysics would lead to. The later *Essays on Truth and Reality* opens up the further discussion of some of his main problems. One other work, *Ethical Studies*, for long out of print, seems of set purpose never to have been reprinted, probably because it tended to present a view in which personality occupies a more significant place and is accorded more

¹ Died 1924.

Principles of Logic. Oxford, 1883.

Ethical Studies. London, 1876.

Appearance and Reality. London, 1893.

Essays on Truth and Reality. London, 1914.

permanent worth than is attributed to it in the central exposition of his thought.

The conception of a perfect experience seems to be the fundamental one of Bradley's philosophy. On this depends his view as to the nature of truth. Absolute truth can be only for Absolute experience itself in which the unity of all is revealed. And Bradley maintains that all propositions short of this must be only partially true. To become wholly true they would require some change, in view of what is as yet not included in them, and, consequently, they are so far partially false. But whence this capacity so to judge of finite propositions? Does it not imply that one is already *ipso facto* at the standpoint of perfect experience? Bradley does not see the force of such an objection. He simply maintains that all that may be said of finite judgments is that one is more true or more false than another.

For British Idealism the central principle is that reality is experience, and this essentially is consciousness and its contents. Distinctions of the so-called physical and the so-called psychical are distinctions within experience. Idealism opposes Naturalism as hypostatizing, as it were, certain aspects within experience and regarding them not only as existing independently in themselves, but also as the ground or even the cause of all else. Naturalism goes beyond the facts in some directions just because it does not take into account other facts. The

Absolutist's rejection of Naturalism may be said to depend upon the judgement that it is based on imperfect experience. And this, at once, gives us Absolutism's underlying conception—that of perfect experience. It is also not difficult to understand that this is regarded as necessarily One, for (we may suppose it argued), if there were two, one would need to be in some way different from the other. And that would imply that one had some characteristic that the other had not, and so one at least would be imperfect. Further, as all must be included within the one perfect experience, each would be regarded as inexhaustive and therefore imperfect if it did not contain the other.

In his chief work Bradley occupies himself predominantly with showing the lack of finality in the leading conceptions of our everyday finite judgements. With an impressive and even fascinating acuteness, he tries to show the incoherency, the inconsistency, the contradictions in all the categories of our thought. The ideas of space and of time are self-contradictory. Morality is self-contradictory. Contradiction is, in fact, the note of all appearance. Ultimately it comes to this, that according to Bradley only that is real which is not in relation. There can be no knowledge of the Absolute, because knowledge involves a relation of knower and known, and no object of knowledge in relation with a knower can be the Absolute. Similarly the temporal is related, and the Absolute must transcend time.

The real is a coherent whole : it is devoid of contradictions. But the categories of human knowledge are shot through and through with contradictions. Appearances have their unreality because of their contradictions : yet in spite of this it seems also correct to say that according to Bradley reality exists only in the appearances. In a most astonishing manner for one generally so acute, he merely evades the issue by maintaining the unintelligible subterfuge that in the Absolute the appearances are "transmuted," whatever that may mean. It would be justifiable to retort on his own method that the Absolute is not absolute if it does not contain the appearances as they appear with all their contradictions, whatever else it may contain in addition.

Bradley professes to start from an "ultimate fact," the union of the one and the many, diversity in unity of feeling. But there is a big step in thought from the idea of unity of immediate feeling of the individual finite consciousness to the idea of the unity of the Absolute, and this step requires some justification. The method adopted by Bradley is to point to what he regards as the unity of undifferentiated feeling before the emergence of conscious thought, and, really by analogy, to maintain the existence of a unity transcending it. "From such an experience below relations we can rise to the idea of a superior unity above them. Thus we can attach a full and positive meaning to the state-

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ment that Reality is one." It may, however, be asked whether such *idea* of superior unity is in any way comparable with the alleged initial unitary feeling; and further, whether the idea is valid of Reality. On the other hand, it is also open to doubt as to whether there is any such initial unity of feeling. To affirm it is to make an assumption concerning a condition of which we have no immediate experience, since at *our* lowest level of consciousness there is always a duality in experience, some form of subjective-objective relationship.

In his later writings Bradley himself tends to admit that this notion of an immediate feeling of unity is something which we come to think and is not an actual experience. And that raises the important question whether there is actually any real experience devoid of relations. He fails to show that unity of merely immediate experience is unity in his meaning of the term, and that it is any ground for the assertion of the unity of Reality. The assertion, that "from the first and throughout, our finite centre is one thing directly with the all-embracing Universe and through the Universe it is indirectly one thing . . . with all other centres," is ambiguous. If it means simply that each finite centre is *related* to all else (and does not "all-embracing" signify relation?) it may be easily admitted. But if Reality is that which has no relations, if it transcends relations, and the assertion

means that each is truly identical with each and with the Whole: this is surely unjustified.

Allied with the fundamental conception of the Absolute as perfect is also the idea of the Whole as alone fully real. All else—that is, all that is included in the Whole—has a greater or less degree of reality. When this theory of degrees of reality is looked into closely it seems to be little more than a tautology, somewhat as follows: The Whole is the Real: the Real is the Whole: therefore that which is a part is not the Whole, and therefore is not the Real. It is, however, a part and may be a larger or a smaller part. To say of a part that it has a certain degree of reality comes eventually to nothing more than “a part is a part.” It pleases Bradley to call this difference of smaller or greater, of less or more content, a difference of degrees, and this as “degrees of reality.” Thereby he gets read into the expression something of the common significance of the term “reality,” which does not correspond with the rest of his system. Hence has arisen inevitable confusion through attempts to find in Bradley’s view something more profound than his exposition justifies, and efforts to associate it with the common test of reality, the ultimate experience of self-consciousness.

All this seems very remote from thought on the problems of human existence; but the applications made have more definite significance in this connection. Thus the self, finite personality, is a

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"mass of confusion," a hopeless complex of contradictions, and hence simply appearance. Such is the main attitude of *Appearance and Reality* on this important subject, but in later editions Bradley says that his whole view may be considered as based on the self, that a self or system of selves is the highest thing we have. He even talks of "starting from the self." That, however, suggests an attitude opposed both to the main implication and to definite statements of his philosophy.

On another subject regarded as of significance for our attitude to existence, the nature and being of God, Bradley is more consistent than some of those who follow him from afar. He admits that the Absolute cannot be regarded by him as God, because the Absolute has no relations, and it is essential for religion that man has relations with God. God must, therefore, be something less than the Absolute. There is a fundamental inconsistency in religion, in that God must be the "complete satisfaction of all finite aspiration," and so perfect: while, standing in relation to my will, he is subject to relation, and therefore (in Bradley's view) imperfect. But, maintaining, as he does, that we cannot attain to ultimate truth, he says that, to insist on "ultimate theoretical consistency" "becomes once for all ridiculous." Thence he jumps to the important conclusion: "The ideas which best express our highest religious needs and their satisfaction must certainly be true." That may

seem a generous and a promising attitude ; but the question is : What are these ideas which satisfy the highest religious needs ?

The essential content of the religious consciousness must be lost or denied, writes Bradley, " on the assumption that individual men, yourself and myself, are real each in his own right. . . ." Such a view of the individual is, however, " mere illusion." Hence the essential truth for religion may be maintained : " the real presence of God's will in mine, our actual and literal satisfaction in common." That is far more important than the idea of God's personality : it does not involve that God is another independent individual over against a number of other independent individuals. " For religion, in short, if the one indwelling Spirit is removed, there are no spirits left." Criticism of such statements as these hardly seems necessary. Having taken a particular conception of religion as " the real presence of God's will in mine," he wanders round and round with it, like the mythological snake eating its own tail. What after all is the meaning of " God's will " and " mine " and the " presence of God's will in mine " ? If they are identical, then obviously if the *one* indwelling Spirit is removed, there can be no spirits left. Nevertheless, Bradley is prepared to accept the belief in God as a separate individual as " justified and true," but " only if it is supplemented by other beliefs which really contradict it." Thereafter he lapses into poetry :

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" Unless the Maker and Sustainer becomes also the indwelling Life and Mind and the inspiring Love, how much of the Universe is impoverished ! " With that we may well leave Bradley. We have noted Chesterton's remark as to the attention to details in the present age, that " Everything matters—except everything " : Absolute Idealism as presented by Bradley is aware of everything—the Absolute and its perfection—but absolutely sure of no particular proposition.

The philosophy of *Bernard Bosanquet*,¹ though it has some marked affinities with that of Bradley, in its working out shows the independent reflection of a mind confident in the strength of the main principle. Both in his own treatment of problems and in his criticism of opposing views, Bosanquet is anxious to make clear the constructive character of this principle and the comprehensive and positive attitude to life implied. In Bosanquet's exposition the principle may be stated to be that of consistency and internal coherence. Reality is a perfect system : thought can be satisfied with nothing less. Con-

¹ Died 1923.

Logic. Oxford, 1888.

The Principle of Individuality and Value. Gifford Lectures. London, 1912.

The Value and Destiny of the Individual. Gifford Lectures. London, 1913.

What Religion is. London, 1920.

The Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy. London, 1923.

ceptions must be examined with reference to their coherence in the general scheme of thought, and expressed in such a manner as conforms with their position in the whole. Position in thought may be said to be, according to Bosanquet, also position in reality, for thought and being are ultimately identical.

Bosanquet puts his general position most concisely in a volume on *Contemporary Philosophy*. There he says that his own work consists mainly in a critical survey of experience, holding that "no experience, however empirical *prima facie*," is destitute of metaphysical implication. He asserts his "complete sympathy" with the doctrine of "idealism which rests on the assertion that nothing exists but spirit." Such a statement does not take us far, and some of the further descriptions are in the highest degree perplexing. Thus we are told that the universe is a highly differentiated concrete, and also that thought is reality. Yet the finite course of thought is partial and abstract, and the objective order of things is not a course of ideas in finite experience. What then is this "thought" which is reality? How is it related to ideas in finite experience? How is this "thought" which is reality to be known? These very terms, if they refer to anything, refer to ideas in the mind of Bosanquet, in his finite experience. And what is the actual significance of "abstract" and "concrete" as used in such statements? Apparently

again, as with Bradley's degrees of reality, nothing but a difference of whole and part. Thought, the differentiated concrete, reality, that is the Whole: the course of ideas in finite experience, the abstract, that is simply part.

Bosanquet's Absolute Idealism is thus another attempt to state the implications of the idea of a perfect whole, and to indicate the content of this whole as an order in which each finite experience has its place. Nevertheless, "we can never actually embody in finite experience the thought which is the objective order and reality of things." And though "to this reality there is no other pathway than that which thought itself prescribes," it should not be forgotten that this thought is "not a course of ideas in finite experience." When, in spite of this, Bosanquet suggests that he knows that this thought has prescribed a pathway, one cannot but ask: What is this "thought"? What is this "pathway"?

The all-dominant conception of the perfect Whole of thought (which is reality) leads Bosanquet to criticism of current convictions concerning the nature of time and change. These convictions he considers to be intimately bound up with the modern notion of "progress," and so with what he calls the "ethical" attitude. That attitude, he agrees, is a primary impulse and instinct of human nature, but he protests against views which "bring down the universal evolution to the level of move-

ments of groups within terrestrial history." In contrast with this, virtually an objection to the tendency to anthropomorphism, he presents us again with the idea of the perfect Whole, with regard to which one might indeed ask whether one could at all speak of "evolution," even with the adjective "universal." "The foundational character of all that is, while containing the infinite changes which are the revelation of its inexhaustible life, not confinable within a single direction or temporal career, is not itself in progress and mutation."

In his first course of Gifford Lectures, Bosanquet maintains that the reality and value of everything in the universe depends on the degree of its embodiment of the principle of individuality, completeness, coherence and self-containedness. Such individuality only the universe itself fully possesses. In his second course he contends that with the distinction of persons there is also evidence of an underlying unity. The life of the particular person is a form of "soul-making," through natural and social selection and self-determination through will. But the life of the particular person in apparent self-completion is one of adventure and suffering. Eventually this suffering leads, in religion, to the recognition of the soul's true nature, its unity with and completion in the Whole, and so to its security and stability.

The one principle of this system of thought is that the Real is the Whole: the only true individual

is the Whole. There is only one genuine Universal, which is not an abstract rule, but a concrete totality. Though we may say we are finite on such a theory of Absolutism, we should also be regarded as infinite in that we are essential to the Whole. For, without us, the Whole is lacking, and in it we are infinite through our relations to the Whole. Thus, says Bosanquet, one may think of the Absolute within and the Absolute without, but if this proposition is to have meaning it is not by taking the term Absolute in the same sense in each case. The significance of the Absolute within appears to be that ineradicable experience of ultimate reality as felt within. The Absolute without seems to imply the Whole. What, however, is the Absolute relation between this Absolute within and this Absolute without?

As the Whole is the only true individual, so it is as such the ultimate value. The Whole is thus alone perfect. The Absolute is the Perfect One: infinite and ultimate. The finite is within the infinite, which is more than and different from a totality of finites. Time is within the "timeless" or eternal. So Bosanquet imagines that while teleology or purpose applies with regard to finites it is not predicable of the Whole. It seems as though the Absolute is and is not dissociated into the many of appearance, but the relation between these two levels is not apparent. In referring to the Absolute, Bosanquet uses the term "Life"

and other terms implying process, but that is little more than make-believe, for all Ends being equally present to the Absolute, there is no real ground for purpose.

Although on such a theory it might be supposed that all is equally eternal, strangely enough, it is maintained that evil cannot be regarded as ultimate and radical. For the conflict of so-called good and evil, being within the Whole, is part and parcel of the Absolute perfection! The Whole cannot rightly be conceived from the standpoint of moralism, for if there is to be infinite process towards perfection, perfection is *ipso facto* never to be reached. So, somehow, perfection exists even in the moral effort itself, though thus morality is transcended and religion attained. Religion involves the "real awareness of an all-inclusive world." Yet, as Sorley significantly urges: "I would even say that the function of religion (*i.e.* from finite to infinite), if opposed to morality as Bosanquet opposes it, is to undo the work of creation—emanation—reproduction, appearance."

Bosanquet seems to see no true reality, no alternative between mere points with no positive character or striving, and the universe as a Whole. Yet it is clear that the individuals of pluralism or theism, though not the universe, are also not mere points. A mere point is obviously only a logical abstraction, an idea. If there can be no individual with spontaneity, except as the Whole is individual, it may be

doubted whether there is any meaning in talking of spontaneity at all, seeing that for Bosanquet the Whole contains already all that was, is or could be, in what is called the past, present and future.

Though presented differently, the thought of *Clement Charles Julian Webb*¹ is really another example of Absolute Idealism, with a mainly theological approach to the fundamental problems. He sees the necessity of taking into consideration the actual contents of the religious experience and of trying to understand philosophically the doctrines, emotions and practices of religion. This notwithstanding, it may be urged that his statements appear to be dominated more by certain philosophical views he has accepted than by an independent examination of religion. The definitely Absolutist attitude is seen already in an early volume of studies entitled *Problems in the Relation of God and Man*.

It has been seen that Bradley maintains that the God of religion cannot rightly be identified with the Absolute. In his first volume of Gifford Lectures, Webb says that forms of the doctrine of God as "finite" fail "just because they abandon the attempt to identify God with the Absolute, and in so doing abandon the quest which is religion." The identification of God and the Absolute is

¹ *Problems in the Relation of God and Man*. London, 1911.

God and Personality. Gifford Lectures. London, 1919.

Divine Personality and Human Life. Gifford Lectures. London, 1920.

reiterated through the volume in different ways. Webb even goes so far as to assert that the statement that "God is not the Absolute" must "if seriously taken make nonsense of religion." It will be well, therefore, to follow out the implications of this view itself to see to what it leads. Webb does not explicitly tell us much as to what he means by the Absolute. It is "that unity behind and through all differences." It is "the Ultimate Reality." But the Absolute cannot be absolute if anything is excluded. Hence it must include those, from Webb's position, nonsensical people who think that the identification of God and the Absolute makes nonsense of religion.

The Absolute must include the error and sin, of which Webb talks, and these in their forms as error and sin, even if also in the forms in which they are, to use Bradley's question-begging term "transmuted." Surely this Absolute is not the Object of religious experience. Suppose that it is. Then the worshipper, being within the Absolute, that is, within God, the religious life is ultimately God loving Himself: moreover, the opposition to religion as superstition is also just God opposing Himself. Talking in terms of "nonsense"—Webb's own unfortunate expression—it may be asked: Could anything make greater nonsense of religion? Webb says rightly that religion involves reverence. But "if seriously taken," as including experience in all its aspects, the Absolute is likely to arouse disgust

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as well as reverence. The fact is, that the contention that "if God is not the Absolute, nonsense is made of religion," is just an assumption from a particular philosophical standpoint not justified by consideration of actual religious experience. That at its highest the religious ideal inspires hope and endeavour for the perfection of all, for the complete triumph of the good, and can be fully satisfied with nothing less, may be admitted. That, however, does not appear incompatible with a philosophical view for which the Absolute and God are not identical, a view for which the Absolute comprises God and other selves.

Further consideration shows that Webb's doctrine of ultimate Reality, or the Absolute, involves that the ideal is the real. "Whatever we have reason to think is incompatible with that eternal nature of Reality, we have reason to think did not occur in the past and will not occur in the future." But, how can we decide as to what is "incompatible with that eternal nature of Reality"? Are the brutal and pitiless massacres, the disgusting debaucheries, which make lurid the pages of history and the gutter Press, not "incompatible with that eternal nature"? Or have they never really happened? Should not an Idealist, for whom ideas have such significance, feel that the mere idea of these would itself be bad enough? But there seems no ground whatever for rejecting the belief that such things have happened in such a manner

as to arouse feelings of repulsion and righteous anger. There is no adequate justification for Absolute Idealism, logically considered, to rule them out as such from that "eternal nature of Reality." The objection to be made against most Absolute Idealists is that they are not thorough-going: judged by their own principles they are not absolute enough. At least this can be said: they would rule out from the Absolute appearances as they appear. This objection has particular force against Webb just in that, in his identification of God and the Absolute, he is concerned in large measure with that which men regard or should regard as the Object worthy of the highest worship—and not also of the bitterest loathing. One may reasonably dispute Webb's right "to take for granted" that "in the Ultimate Reality, in the Absolute, the discords and seeming contradictions of the world of appearances are laid to rest." One may also reasonably ask: What is the value of such a belief if the Absolute *in us* experiences the discords and seeming contradictions?

While identifying God with the Absolute, Webb also differs from Bradley in the importance he attaches to the attribution of personality to God. The problem of the personality of God is rendered even more difficult than it is usually found to be, by the identification with the Absolute. In Webb's exposition there is hesitating oscillation between the use of the two terms: *Divine Personality* (as

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implying the personality of God, or God as person) and *personality in God*. The defence of the latter seems at times to imply doubt concerning or even the rejection of the former. Eventually he endeavours to "clear up" his position by reference to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. He conceives the "self" and the "other" of the Divine Life as each having "the satisfactory completeness of a distinct person," and again the unity of this "self" and "other" (virtually two selves) as also possessing "the complete reality of Personal Spirit." To this it may be urged that while a self and the reality with which it is in contact may both be persons, it is not clear how in any intelligible sense their relation can constitute a third person.

In *Divine Personality and Human Life* Webb endeavours to show the mutual implications of the concept of divine personality and the different sides of human life, such as knowledge, morality, art and politics. Not only are all these, in his opinion, capable of being better understood when considered along with the idea of divine personality as a fundamental principle of Reality, but they also contribute something to our understanding of that principle. In this volume Webb makes a much-needed attempt to bridge the gulf, which seems to be getting wider, between academic philosophers and the wider world of men and women interested in general culture.

Idealism in Britain has had two main tendencies,

one inspired by a type of moral enthusiasm, the other by a keenness for logical and metaphysical enquiry. Within recent years the former has been represented by *Henry Jones*¹ together with many of his students from Glasgow, by *John Henry Muirhead*, and *John Stuart Mackenzie*; the latter in a distinctly critical fashion by *Harold H. Joachim*, *Norman Kemp Smith* and *John Alexander Smith*, the last of whom acknowledges the influence upon him of Benedetto Croce and Giovanni Gentile. With the decline of severely metaphysical Absolute Idealism appeal is now made to the various sides of human nature. This is seen, for example, in *The Philosophy of Humanism and of other Subjects* by *Richard Burdon Haldane*,² who had previously developed a definitely Idealistic philosophy.

The Absolutist attitude still remains: knowledge comes first; relations are all internal. Meaning implies the presence of mind and has its home there, though mind is not necessarily that of the particular individual, for an individual has meaning only as an object within the world as it is for mind. From this standpoint it is contended that the truth

¹ Died 1922.

The Working Faith of the Social Reformer. London, 1910.

Idealism as a Practical Creed. Glasgow, 1909.

A Faith that Enquires. Gifford Lectures. London, 1922.

² *The Pathway to Reality.* Gifford Lectures: I. London, 1904; II. London, 1905.

The Philosophy of Humanism and of other Subjects. London, 1922.

science gives us is invariably relative. Even philosophy has principally the function of critical examination of knowledge, indicating relativity, and it would seem does not, according to Haldane, give us final truth, even though he still virtually asserts the identity of knowledge and experience. For if experience is taken as covering all its implications it becomes indistinguishable from knowledge, if this is understood in its full sense. "Truth and error, reality and unreality, righteousness and sin, beauty and ugliness, and all else that is distinguished, get meaning only within knowledge. It is only for knowledge that they are existent." In knowledge the universal and the particular are never found apart.

The impression of the self as finite is one within knowledge. Nevertheless it is with certain of the aspects of the life of the self, especially human values, that Humanism is concerned. There is an insistence here on the particulars of experience rather than on the universals of thought of the earlier Idealism. In art and religion "we see the stress that is distinctive of Humanism, with its emphasis on concreteness and the necessity for the recognition of that inexhaustible moment of the particular which is the condition of imaginative construction. Nevertheless knowledge is a single whole, and to be adequately understood each department must be interpreted through its organic relation to other departments."

In James Black Baillie's¹ *Studies in Human Nature* we see signs not merely of this shifting of emphasis, but what amounts almost to a definite rejection of Idealism in its Absolutist form, a position which formerly he vigorously maintained. Now he centres attention on man's concrete individuality and the many-sidedness of his nature, contending that through each and all there is some form of acquaintance with reality. He points out the crux to which the Idealism which represents the Absolute as devoid of contradiction, and finite reality as inherently contradictory, is led. It is the finite being of the philosopher who arrives at such results, and it is the finite being who is called on to remove the contradiction. In opposition to the logical dialectics of the earlier Idealism, he insists that "the complex individuality of man is the best clue to the nature of reality and not intellectual activity alone." "We require and use all our functions to sustain the equilibrium of our individuality with the real, and to become alive to what reality is for us."

Instead of representing the individual as merged in the Absolute, we are to look upon human experience as a venture for the conservation and fulfilment of our personality, as the process of the emergence of the individual and his development into the definiteness of a substantive personality. Further, the aim of thought and of life is to be admittedly

¹ *The Idealist Construction of Experience*. London, 1906.
Studies in Human Nature. London, 1921.

conceived in human terms. "By assuming human shape, ultimate Reality thereby literally becomes human. . . . We have neither the capacity nor the desire to be other than that part of ultimate Reality which we embody. To be this fully is to be both human and ultimately real at once." In this there is no aping the point of view of the Absolute and of a perfection appropriate only to such. Knowledge has a realistic character, and its process involves non-logical factors. So, the emotions have a part in the individual's consciousness of the real. "The truth seems to be that emotion is one form in which, in a unique manner, the nature of the real is revealed in man's life." It is partly through emotion that we experience a response to an "all-encompassing Reality." From this "there is no escape." "It is a presence and a power at once." The organic union of the individual with the all-inclusive Reality is said to be felt in the emotion of beauty and in completely personal form. "The individual who responds emotionally to this Reality as personal, never begins by explaining or demonstrating that this Reality is a person or is personal, and never imagines that such a demonstration is necessary for the purpose of justifying his experience. . . . His experience is its own justification, for, in fact, he does find that the Reality responds to him emotionally."

During the period included in this survey only one

prominent philosopher at Cambridge has expounded views which have close affinities with Absolute Idealism—*John McTaggart Ellis McTaggart*.¹ He himself calls his view Ontological Idealism. His first publications were expositions of the philosophy of Hegel, though Hegelians of the Oxford and Glasgow schools always maintain that they contain more of McTaggart than of Hegel. In 1906 he dealt in a more popular fashion with some of the prominent problems of life and religion in *Some Dogmas of Religion*. The first volume of his systematic exposition of his own philosophy appeared in 1920 with the title, *The Nature of Existence*. Unfortunately his death occurred before he could publish the second volume, but his manuscript is in a sufficiently finished form for it to be published eventually.

McTaggart is akin to the Absolute Idealists not merely in his insistence that all that exists is spiritual, but in his desire to state the fundamental principles of the ultimate nature of reality as known *a priori* in metaphysical reflection and with the least possible reference to what may by contrast be called empirical. So he maintains that of the two parts of his system, "The first admitted only two empirical premises—'something exists' and 'what exists is differentiated.' The rest of it professes to be entirely *a priori*." He introduces the term sub-

¹ *Some Dogmas of Religion*. London, 1906.
The Nature of Existence. Cambridge, 1920.

stance, and on the basis of experience accepts the view that there are more substances than one, though they may be all taken together as a single substance. Thus from one point of view he hints at a Singularism, though from another his system appears to have that character of Pluralism which led many Absolutists to challenge the validity of his interpretation of Hegel. Most of his discussion of the nature (or rather natures) of substances is highly abstract, one might almost say largely verbal, and need not concern us here. A substance is a unity compounded of or manifested in particular characteristics. Each substance is particular and as such indefinable, but may be described. Now while this may seem at first sight to commit us to an ultimate Pluralism, we are brought back again to Singularism: "there is one substance which contains all other substances. This substance is the Universe." Incidentally it may be suggested that the *a priori* character of McTaggart's thought may be seen in his contention that no substance is simple in all its dimensions. Surely if one wishes to form this kind of concept of substance one may, but the question must still remain as to whether the ultimate nature of reality is such.

None of these substances is of the nature which is usually called matter. Perceptions of objects called material often contradict one another. Some or all may be erroneous. On their basis one cannot rightly assert that any substance has the quality of

materiality. With spirit the situation is different, for, in oneself one perceives one substance as possessing the simple quality of being a self. "Although we may not have any absolute demonstration, we have, I think," says McTaggart, "good reason to believe that reality is spiritual—in other words, that nothing exists except selves, groups of selves and parts of selves." The relation of the selves to one another is an emotional one of love and affection. But a self is not necessarily always self-conscious. As McTaggart maintains that no self can be part of another self, the substance which is the Universe cannot be regarded as a self. His system therefore does not provide for a view according to which for significance in religion the Absolute could be identified with God.

If the Absolute is not a personality in the sense of the God of religion, neither, according to McTaggart, is there sufficient ground for believing in one of the many selves as God. In *Some Dogmas of Religion* he criticises the conceptions of the attributes of deity. If God is creator, one is not justified in arguing to his omnipotence, for everywhere one sees ends achieved by means, and an omnipotent Being would require no means. The problem of evil also seems to involve either that God (if there is one) is not all-good; or that he is not omnipotent. In McTaggart's opinion the difficulty is not really overcome by a theory of God as finite. But he finds no adequate grounds for

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holding that there is a divine creator, and he thinks that in his system of philosophy there is no need for the idea. There may be a Power influencing others so profoundly that he would properly be called God, "but there seems no evidence which would make his existence probable."

Perhaps the greatest difficulty in McTaggart's philosophy is his view of Time. Time—an empirically known characteristic—cannot really belong to anything that exists. "All that I perceive appears to be in time, while in reality nothing is in time." Hence when McTaggart speaks of differentiation he cannot rightly mean a process of becoming differentiated, but a state of being differentiated. Real change there is not. Nevertheless in his exposition he treats of the life of selves *sub specie temporis*. As such they begin but do not end: the periods before and after the present life are divided into a plurality of lives, "separated from one another as the present life of each is separated from all that goes before and all that goes after." In the final stage the life *sub specie temporis* "does not appear to itself in time at all." The suggestion is as though through stages of life in time a timeless condition of eternity is attained. Viewed *sub specie temporis* the evil is just as real as the good, but McTaggart describes the final stage as unmixed good. Here is implied a process of differentiation with progress from less good to more good. But if nothing can have the characteristic of Time, this is a delusory

appearance and there seems a radical contradiction at the heart of McTaggart's philosophy. And apart from the type of conceptionalist argument that the final stage is unmixed good because the unmixed good is alone the final stage, no adequate reasons have yet been presented by McTaggart why it should be believed that such a stage will be attained *sub specie temporis*, or already exists *sub specie æternitatis*. Similarly, his view of immortality as a series of lives each of which may contain no conscious memory of the previous ones is only with difficulty reconciled with such progress and with the demands of human sentiment which he appears to have in mind when he talks of his "proof" of immortality.

Among contemporary British thinkers there has been no more acute critic of some aspects of Absolute Idealism than *Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison*.¹ Though possibly to himself his position seems nearer to Theism, there is so much in this exposition which is on lines with marked affinities to Absolute Idealism, that it appears to us that his thought has its rightful place in the context of this chapter. His position forms an excellent transition stage to quite other views, as it may be regarded as intermediary between the Absolutism previously dis-

¹ *Hegelianism and Personality*. Edinburgh, 1887.

Man's Place in the Cosmos. Edinburgh, 1897.

The Idea of God in Recent Philosophy. Gifford Lectures. Oxford, 1917.

The Idea of Immortality. Gifford Lectures. Oxford, 1922.

cussed and the more definite Theism to be described later. No living British writer on philosophical subjects manifests broader sympathies, more balanced judgements, or a finer literary style. There is no British philosopher whose attitude would be more acceptable for general adoption—if the facts of experience and of intense human feelings would allow. Almost fifty years ago Pringle-Pattison published in *Hegelianism and Personality* one of the earliest and most important critical rejections of that form of Idealism which, in insisting on the status and significance of universal ideas, fails to acknowledge the reality of individual consciousnesses. In his Gifford Lectures, delivered in the period of our survey, he shows a tendency to turn more towards the Absolutist position.

Pringle-Pattison develops his own views mainly through critical examination of opposing theories. Even if it were intellectually credible, Naturalism must be rejected because "it outrages the deepest convictions on which our life is built." It is based on a consideration of only part of the facts, and it attempts to interpret the higher by the lower. This is essentially a correct criticism in spite of the fact, noticed in our second chapter, that contemporary Naturalism disclaims any aim at interpretation. A true philosophy will endeavour to see the whole and each part in relation to the principle of the whole. It will judge the lower by the higher, as the steps in a process by which the end is gradually achieved.

Even within the Natural Sciences themselves, especially in biology, the mechanical view which Pringle-Pattison regards as embodying the main principle of Naturalism has been seriously challenged. In the realm of the biological there is learning by experience. This suggests the idea of progress, "certainly the only idea which brings order and unity into our human world." Later developments of biological science show far more emphasis on the reality of group co-operation in evolution and a certain opposition to the individualistic conception of natural selection which prevailed among earlier thinkers. To the theoretical and practical Positivism, which is more common than at first appears in contemporary British thought, Pringle-Pattison objects that it treats humanity "as a self-contained and self-created being—a kind of finite Absolute." Its "deification of man is equivalent to the dethronement of God." For these attitudes, which treat man as supreme, "Nature is, as it were, a brute fact with which man finds himself confronted." Their appeal and strength lie in their devotion to the ethical values of humanity, but apart from humanity as it actually exists they have to find satisfaction in a shadowland of poetic fancy.

Against all the partial views which separate man and Nature, reason and value, science and religion, Pringle-Pattison urges that man is organic to Nature and Nature to man. Human life rests upon Nature: Nature so far as we know it reaches its

meaning in relation to man. To treat of either as having significance independently of the other is fundamentally wrong. The idea of an external self-existent world and an empty ego are of no philosophical usefulness. But besides the so-called facts of Nature there are the ideals and values which make their appearance in human experience. They express the fundamental character of that experience. They are not a mere addition to reality; Nature itself is to be interpreted with reference to these ideals. The principle of value is to be regarded as representing "the ultimate insight of a larger knowledge." Nevertheless the criterion of value must be furnished by appearances. "The nature of reality can only mean the systematic structure discernible in its appearances." In "appearances we already grasp the nature of reality." "It is the noumena or real things that we know, and phenomena are what we know about them." In such a statement a main problem of the theory of knowledge and reality is decently covered. The distinction between true and false is said to depend upon the difference between a narrower and a wider experience—a view common enough among Absolutists. The process of life is that of rising to new planes of experience, and the whole is described as "progressive revelation."

So Pringle-Pattison commits himself to the doctrine of "degrees of truth or reality," which he finds in Spinoza, and the emphatic reassertion of

which he considers to have made Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* so important a contribution to modern thought. To this it may be objected that while it may be intelligible to speak of different degrees of truth in propositions (except perhaps in the simplest forms), it is unintelligible to talk of degrees of reality. The merest and most transitory sensation or the passing amusement of a joke are in themselves as experiences as real as the *amor intellectualis dei*. Viewed in relation with a larger whole a particular experience may have more meaning than otherwise it was thought to have, but its reality is not therefore greater. Behind the whole of Pringle-Pattison's exposition we seem to find again the fundamental conception of Absolutism that reality is a perfect system. There is no way absolutely to refute the validity of this conception, but it must be insisted that it does not appear to be a necessity of thought or of life.

The criterion of reality is an all-inclusive principle of value: intellectual consistency and comprehensiveness is insufficient. Yet in his exposition Pringle-Pattison seems to fall into what may be regarded as an all too common, in fact, the radical Idealist, error of identifying intellectual consistency with harmony of actualities. A consistent whole for thought is not necessarily one referring to a world without real oppositions. A consistent philosophy might be formed concerning a world full of oppositions, of conflicts and cross purposes. It is

judgements and not appearances which may be contradictory. If appearances are taken in their particularity they are factually distinct, and though they may be in opposition, they are not contradictory. Neither would the propositions describing them be, if they pay due regard to the particularity of that which they describe.

In accordance with the particular form of dogmatism common among Idealists, Pringle-Pattison asserts that the "possibilities of thought cannot exceed the actuality of being." Why not? If thought may fall short of a complete representation of being in any direction in thought, why should it be asserted to be impossible for being in some other direction to fall short of the ideals of thought? It is of the essence of this assumption to imply that because thought has an idea which it calls the idea of perfection, reality as such must be perfect. And, together with such assumption, Idealists are curiously inattentive to the task of elaborating the content of the idea.

The most important criticism Pringle-Pattison urges against Absolute Idealism, as found especially in the works of Bosanquet and Bradley, is its failure to appreciate the meaning of finite selfhood. For them the world is dissolved into a collection of qualities or adjectives, to which it is supposed the only alternative is a pluralism of self-subsistent and unrelated reals. Against these views Pringle-Pattison urges the substantive existence of every real

individual in the Aristotelian sense. He maintains that the individual has a genuine freedom. The person "is the source of the action: we cannot go behind him." "He must give his response." The process of transformation in moral life "is always, in a very real aspect of it, his own act, his deliberate choice."

God is to be called "personal" since any other expression tends to suggest something less than personal, and God cannot be that. He is infinite, the eternal creator and sustainer. In Him the highest is actual. Between Him and His creatures there is (the possibility of?) love and worship. In a discussion rejecting the view that "humanity" is an abstraction, God is called the "supreme universal." But humanity is real only in the individual human beings and their particular relations: we have no ground for believing that humanity is a being, a sort of over-individual in addition to the individuals and their relations. Throughout the constructive portion of his Gifford Lectures there is a tendency to oscillate between treating God as an over-individual and as the systematic totality of all existence. There is an oscillation between identifying and distinguishing ontologically God and finite beings.

As against Absolute Idealists generally the ontological reality of the finite selves is maintained, but the account of the relation between these and God is very indefinite. It may be willingly ad-

mitted that "It is in the very nature of the case impossible that we should *understand* the relation (if one may use such a finite term as a relation) between a creative spirit and its creatures, whether as regards the independence conferred or the mode in which the life history of the finite being still remains part of the infinite experience." Nevertheless he significantly says of finite individuals that they "may overlap indefinitely in content, . . . *ex vi termini*, they cannot overlap at all in existence": a truth which could scarcely be better put.

One would suppose that with the insistence on the ontological reality of finite centres there would be equally clear emphasis on a similar independent and distinct reality of God. God transcends the finite centres in values, but it seems as though they are ontologically part of Him. And this leads to very great difficulties. Some may be seen in regard to the notion of a "self-imparting God," and "progressive self-revelation." If ontologically the finite centres are not distinct from God, we have ultimately, however much emphasis may be placed on the reality of finite centres, merely a revelation of God to Himself through constituent parts of Himself. Monadism is disposed of rather summarily by Pringle-Pattison, one of the objections being that it is in conflict with common-sense. Yet surely if it is in conflict with common-sense to look upon our food, for example, as composed of monads, it is equally so to take it as a self-revelation of God!

Pringle-Pattison resorts to the facile aid of the idea of divine "immanence." There is something reminiscent of Bradley's poetic strain in the statement that "The authority claimed by what is commonly called the higher self is only intelligible if the ideals of the self are recognised as the immediate presence within us of a spirit leading us into all truth and goodness." The meaning of this, in the light of the general exposition, is that any partial experience of reality is permeated by the principle of the significance of the Whole. That is to put it abstractedly and to hide the difficulty which is evident if stated in ontological terms. For, if God is immanent in all that man is, we have (as far as man is concerned) Pantheism. While if there is any aspect or part of man which is other than God, the question is: Where or in what in man does the immanent divine cease and the merely human begin? And if there can be any "merely human," why should not the whole of man be merely human? In that case the relation between God and man could not be rightly described by the term immanent. However, Pringle-Pattison's whole discussion is to maintain that there is nothing "merely human."

Absolute Idealism has lost its former prestige partly because of criticism of its assumptions with regard to knowledge, and partly because of revulsion from its lack of earnestness in treating of the evil in experience. Having assumed that Reality is

perfect, it endeavours so to describe evil as not incompatible with, even as necessary to this. Ultimately Pringle-Pattison suggests practically the same position. Treating appearance as real, evil being at least an appearance is real. But "in a spiritual organism the evil is thrown off and perishes." What, however, is the metaphysical notion that is here implied by the term "perishes"? If the sensation of toothache and the feeling of malevolence pass away, so also does the taste of "glorious wine" and the feeling of benevolence. He assures us that the past is summed up in the present; and if so the evil is summed up as well as the good. Further, for God existence is an eternal present, and as God is the Absolute, then it must be supposed either that God includes all the evil and is thus not all-good; or distinctions of good and evil do not exist for Him; or evil is only negative, and when one sees the whole from the point of view of the whole it is perfect. The first two of these alternatives are not compatible with the principle of value which has been uppermost in Pringle-Pattison's exposition. The last, for us—finite beings not at the point of view of the Absolute—is something of a mocking assumption, when the positive nature of evil appears as evident as that of any experience whatever. Finally, the position is only aggravated through its conflict with the religious sentiment, when it is contended that the *whole* process of experience is a self-revelation of God.

CHAPTER IV

PRAGMATIST HUMANISM

IN the first decade of the century the attention of philosophical thinkers, and, in an exceptional manner the interest of the general reader also, were attracted to what at first appeared a somewhat revolutionary attitude to thought. To-day, in spite of evidences of its influence, it is almost difficult to believe that the discussions of Pragmatism occurred within the period of contemporary thought. The controversies it aroused and the interest it evoked are almost forgotten. Rarely within modern times has a movement which aroused so much attention sunk so soon into the background. It is not that the movement was superficial or of no real significance. On the contrary, in fact, it has had some important effects. It has had a particularly powerful influence in leading to the decline of the schools of Absolute Idealism both in America and in Britain. It has contributed not a little to the development of modern Realism. But it has never been able to impress itself on any considerable body of opinion either learned or popular as sufficiently satisfactory or adequate, even though all are forced to recognise that none of its opponents is entirely so.

Pragmatism obtained its temporary central position in the realm of philosophical discussion through a variety of circumstances. For some time British psychology, especially in the pioneer work of James Ward and of his pupil George Frederick Stout, had been insisting on the essentially conative and volitional character of mind. Active striving rather than simple cognition or intellectual contemplation appeared the fundamental nature of infra-human and of human consciousness. This view received confirmation and support in the independently and differently developed psychology of William James which was widely studied in English colleges. In addition, though further in the background, there was the influence and the weight of the authority of so eminent a psychologist as Wilhelm Wundt, supporting the same trend of thought. With such closer study of the human mind it began to be seen not only that its fundamental character is conative, but also that the processes of human thought are intimately bound up with human desires.

These forces had been at work for some time in the realm of psychological investigation before they began to have explicit effects on philosophical expression generally. Eventually they combined with the growing opposition to the manner in which most forms of Absolute Idealism treat individual personality. It is a sign of the reaction against Absolute Idealism that this revolt first openly asserted itself in Oxford. In 1902 a volume of

philosophical essays by eight members of the University was published under the title *Personal Idealism*.¹ These essays had arisen out of a common trend of opinion discovered in discussions which had been carried on for a few years. The fundamental purpose of the writers is to vindicate the reality and significance of human personality, which is either neglected or definitely attacked by Naturalism and by Absolute Idealism. Naturalism represents it as no more than a transitory resultant of, or an episode following on, physical processes; while Absolutism treats it as a mere appearance of the Absolute.

The Absolute Idealists had waged war with Naturalism largely on the ground of the theory of knowledge according to which they insisted that things cannot be separated from thought. The writers of *Personal Idealism* therefore concerned themselves more with Absolutism than with Naturalism. Nevertheless, against the latter they emphasise their own particular objections. They oppose it on behalf of the recognition of the real freedom of men as moral agents. They oppose it on behalf of the validity of moral valuations, and in justification of the enthusiasm for ideals. They point out the philosophical problems raised by the concepts of evolution, and the necessary limitations of those concepts. They reject Absolute Idealism

¹ *Personal Idealism*. Philosophical Essays by Eight Members of the University of Oxford. Ed. by H. Sturt. London, 1902.

as not according with facts. They oppose the tendency of Absolutists to refuse "to recognise adequately the volitional side of human nature"; and to imagine that they can survey human experience "from the visionary and impracticable standpoint of an absolute experience." By contrast they sketch the outline of an alternative attitude recognising the character and significance of the human self as fundamental.

From the human subject with its will and its purposes the individual cannot escape, and should not, if he could. But from the outset it is insisted that, though for each the subject is central, it is not isolated. The charge of mere individualism or subjectivism against these Personal Idealists has never been substantiated. The activities of the subject are largely in relation with a world of other subjects and things beyond itself, aiding or hindering the realisation of its desires. The essays in *Personal Idealism* indicate briefly the manner in which, from this point of view, knowledge and error, human freedom, art and religion may be understood. This is not by simple description of the apparently existent, but through reference to changes which activity might cause as guided by ideals. Thus, for Personal Idealism causality is metaphysically real, and to be admitted as such. In the understanding of experience, cause and effect cannot be replaced by any merely logical conceptions of ground and consequent. And experience is not fully intel-

ligible by reference to that from which it has arisen, or by what it is in itself now, but only in relation with what it may become through conative striving.

The significance of this volume in contemporary British thought lies in large measure in the collaboration of these writers in definitely insisting on the fundamental reality of personality. In later years they have shown marked diversity in the development of their positions. The challenge to fuller discussion, bringing out the differences, came a few years later when the attention of British thinkers was definitely drawn to Pragmatism. One cause leading to this was the position given and the importance attached to the philosophy of Henri Bergson by William James in a course of public lectures at Oxford. Though not professedly a Pragmatist by any acceptance of that denomination, Bergson championed a view of the place of conceptual thought in existence which was closely allied with the attitude of Pragmatism as expounded in the works of William James himself.

British interest in the philosophy of Bergson was in its general ideas rather than in its theory of knowledge. It was only for a short time that it attracted much attention, and this chiefly with reference to his views concerning evolution; his contention of a radical difference between instinct and intelligence; and his doctrines of the nature of time and of freedom and their relation. Rightly or wrongly the Absolute had come to be regarded

as stagnant, and Absolute Idealism as stagnating, stultifying to thought, paralysing to action. The philosophy of Bergson was welcomed as an expression of the movement, life, even enthusiasm, at the heart of things. Presented in a literary style in harmony with this spirit, it supplied a stimulus needed for the movement away from Absolute Idealism. But though its influence was considerable and its effects are still evident, it was unable to keep the attention either of philosophical thinkers or of the general reading public for very long. There was a wider and more prolonged interest in Pragmatism, probably because it appeared to many to be a method of bringing philosophical reflection into closer relation with the values and demands of human life.

Nevertheless, in Britain nothing of the character of a definite movement or school arose out of the discussions of Pragmatism. While some effects are still found in contemporary theology, even there they are rare. Only one British thinker of any eminence has persistently advocated a Pragmatist attitude. And *Ferdinand Canning Scott Schiller*¹ himself calls his view Humanism. Though that term has been and is also otherwise used, it is a

¹ *Riddles of the Sphinx: A Study in the Philosophy of Humanism*. London, 1891; 2nd ed., 1910.

Humanism: Philosophical Essays. London, 1903.

Studies in Humanism. London, 1907.

Formal Logic. London, 1912.

Tantalus, or the Future of Man. London, 1924.

better description for his position than Pragmatism. But as the Pragmatist attitude is essential for him, it seems more correct to call his general scheme Pragmatist Humanism. Schiller's thought was not a product of the discussion of Pragmatism in the first decade of the century; his work was a predisposing cause of and a leading part in that discussion. *The Riddles of the Sphinx*, his chief work, was first published in 1891; and the interest in Pragmatism led to a second edition in 1910. Schiller collaborated in the volume *Personal Idealism* already considered.

After a critical examination of Agnosticism, Scepticism and Pessimism, Schiller begins his own constructive effort with a description of the way truth is to be regarded. A truth is a proposition of value, and only continues to deserve recognition so long as it remains such. It is continually being tested, even contested. So long as it gives satisfaction it remains. It is not necessary to say of any proposition that it is absolute, final and eternal. Indeed one ought to renounce all pretension of affirming any such characteristics. From this point of view, philosophy is freed from the impossible task of showing that truth is in some way a copy or reproduction of reality. "All that truth has to do is to be an instrument in man's manipulation of his experience, and it is not requisite that the processes of his thought should in any way imitate or copy those of nature." Philosophy must be content with

making out the general drift of life : it must abandon the idea of obtaining knowledge of " the Absolute " in the sense of Absolute Idealism.

Pragmatist Humanism thus resolutely opposes Absolutism on the fundamental question as to the nature of truth. As contrasted with the contention of the latter that truth is in some way transcendent and independent of the human mind, the former emphasises its dependence on the human mind. In the words of Schiller himself : " If, to be objective, Truth has to have an ' independence ' which exalts itself above all human influence, if to be ' absolute ' it has to be cut off from all relation to human purposes, then Truth becomes unattainable by man and the result is Scepticism. If Truth is correspondence or agreement or contrast with a Real ' transcendent,' it becomes impossible. For the Real which is required to verify it is itself by definition inaccessible." And so he concludes that there is only one actual alternative, Scepticism or Pragmatist Humanism. The only Reality we can know—if we can know any at all—is that which in all its manifestations has relations to the human struggle to know it.

The worth of a philosophical theory of truth must depend in no small degree upon its ability to give a satisfactory account of the nature and possibility of error. As against Absolutism it has been maintained that this it is unable to do. For it, error would appear to be nothing other than partial truth. That anyone should maintain such a view must

seem almost incredible to the ordinary intelligent person, for whom error is not due to the absence of something but the presence of what is positively asserted. Thus in the two propositions: "King Charles I of England died on the scaffold," and "King Charles I of England died in the river Thames," there is indeed one portion of each which may be said to be true, namely "King Charles I of England died." But in addition to this, the second proposition, which is regarded as an error, positively asserts a particular relation between the death of Charles and the river Thames. It is not simply the absence of reference to the scaffold but this positive reference to the Thames which constitutes the error.

This lack of earnestness with regard to the nature of error has been a very definite factor in the rejection of Absolutism. The exponents of Personal Idealism were the first to insist on the necessity of formulating a different view of the nature of error. Pragmatism with its less rigid attitude as to the truth or falsehood of propositions distinguishes these according to their consequences. True propositions are those which satisfy the purpose of the knower, and false those which defeat those purposes. But thus badly stated the view is as opposed to common-sense experience as is that of Absolutism. So the Pragmatist has had to qualify his theory in such ways that more often than not its distinctive character has been explained away. For example, Schiller himself says: "We have never asserted or imagined

that it is possible to pass from the dictum '*all truth works*' to '*all that works is true.*' "

Pragmatist Humanism challenges Absolute Idealism with logical defects and an inadequate interpretation of life. The significance of the unity which it asserts is not at all clear. That men desire some form of unity is no evidence that it exists, and the mere fact that reality has come to be called a "Universe" should not be regarded as compelling us to accept the implications of the idea of unity which Absolutism draws from it. After all, as Schiller himself contends, the question is one of facts and of the interpretation of concepts. Concepts are themselves inadequate to the concreteness of facts. It is "the menial function of these pampered universals," says Schiller, to enable the manipulation of particulars for human ends; for particulars compose the whole content of science and life. Thus Pragmatist Humanism proclaims itself frankly pluralistic. "The sciences are plural; they make a plurality of assumptions; they deal with a plurality of objects; they serve a plurality of purposes." It agrees with the dictum of William James, that there is no point of view from which the world is really one.

There is no hesitation in Schiller's exposition as to what he shall regard as the starting-point for reflection upon existence. "The one indisputable fact and the basis of philosophy is the reality of the self." "All experience is relative to a self, all acts

of knowledge are performed by selves, the whole of our cognitive machinery, principles, axioms, postulates and categories are invented by and modelled upon selves. The self is the meeting-place of all antitheses and ambitions, the battle-ground of all theories and impulses and their arbiter. It is a concrete fact." To such a contention it is of no value to urge that we are not told what the self is. Whatever it is, "there" it is. An inability adequately to describe it is no argument against the admission of its reality. Indeed it is difficult to see how it could be described except in terms of itself, otherwise than by indicating some of its characteristic functions. The self with which man starts, which is present in and through all his experience, is a human self. Hence the name Humanism. "Human motives sharpen all our questions; human satisfaction lurks in all our answers; all our formulas have a human twist." The human self is essentially conative, active, purposive, striving to attain values. The consideration of the values which the self may strive towards and possibly enjoy is, therefore, fundamental in the attempt to understand existence.

With such an attitude Naturalism is rejected not so much on grounds of theoretical criticism of its principles and their application as that it is insufficient to the demands of the human self. When true to its own principles it attempts to obtain a unification of the facts of experience with concepts which apply only to part. In its earlier form, as

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expounded at the time when Schiller wrote his *Riddles of the Sphinx*, it attempted to explain the higher by the lower. Even now it appears to make essential a dependence of the higher on the lower, in the assertion that the higher involves the lower. Naturalism tends to dispense altogether with the term "cause." Pragmatist Humanism insists that the category of cause has validity, but only as used by and of persons. It has been seen in an earlier chapter how Naturalism has changed its complexion in contemporary British thought. Even then, however, it does not entirely escape Schiller's criticism. It does not recognise quite in the same manner, that the development matter undergoes shows that it "is ultimately divine force and divine mechanism." "For coincidentally with the spiritual development of spiritual beings matter also undergoes a process of *spiritualisation*."

With equal vigour Pragmatist Humanism opposes the pretensions of Absolute Idealism, which has the defect of most metaphysics, both of the past and the present, of ignoring facts in pursuit of a system of abstractions. One might imagine that Absolutism speaks of metaphysical realities, when actually it is dealing solely with logical categories. Nevertheless, the verbal symbol cannot do duty for the thing symbolised, and "the development of a logical category is not the same as the evolution of a real individual." With this one gets to the heart of the affair and to the essence of the influence of Schiller's

Pragmatist Humanism, an influence which has passed on into contemporary Realism. It is an insistence on recognising conceptions as such, and on the acknowledgement of other types of realities. And this acknowledgement involves the recognition that realities are a Many, and not simply illusory appearances of a One, the ultimate of Absolutist abstraction. If at all we use the term "Unity," it should not be with the sense of an absolute present condition, but as signifying an ultimate unification towards which in some form men strive.

An interpretation of human experience is possible only as teleological or purposive. The lower has to be regarded as a stage towards the higher in a real process of evolution. But if the past has some of its significance in leading on to the present, the character of the trend of historical process in the past may indicate something of the nature of the End and the meaning of the process. Schiller considers the various ways in which the process of evolution has been described, especially by Naturalism and Absolutism, and shows that they are in the main concerned with abstractions which stand for *qualities*. In contrast with these, individual, person, society, designate particular realities. "If, then, the process of Evolution may be defined as the progressive development of the individual in combination with other individuals, in which the individual passes from the atom to moral person, does not the completion of the process promise us the attainment of

our boldest desires ? ” It is evident in self-examination that personality is an Ideal not yet fully achieved : our individuality is as yet very ill-defined. And Schiller suggests that the life of perfected individuals in a perfect society is what is implied in the Christian conceptions of Heaven and the Communion of Saints. With such admission of the ideal for man, one comes again to an implication of this Humanism with its teleological character. For, if men are the highest individuals we know, “ it is in exploring the depths of our own nature that the clue to the riddle of the world is to be sought. . . . ”

It is from our own direct experience that we obtain the conception of “ cause.” It is from the acts of will that we come to this idea, which afterwards in one way or another has entered the world of thought. Intimately related with this is the notion of choice. Is choice between alternatives real or is it, as determinists maintain, only apparent ? “ If choice is real, if there really are alternatives, it follows that in choosing between them we are exhibiting our power as real agents, real causes, and initiators of new departures in the flow of cosmic change.” Once this is admitted the principle involved may be used in regarding existence generally. In place of what was called by William James a “ block ” universe, in which there is no free play of the parts, we then have the conception of a plastic reality “ capable of new and alternative

developments." Only thus can evolution mean real growth; and real growth mean real change.

For Absolutism all that truly is, eternally is: change is illusory; there is nothing new under the sun. In contrast with this, Pragmatist Humanism asserts that there is such a thing as novelty. Even in the interpretation of the syllogism, contends Schiller, the need for novelty establishes itself. For "if the result of a thought process is not new, the process was superfluous." With the genuine belief in novelty the attitude to metaphysics and to practical life is vastly different from what it is without such belief. The quantitative constancy of Being need not be assumed; and there is no means of proving it. Being may increase or diminish, and either event would be something unaccountable, unpredictable, and so far as we know uncontrolled and undetermined. Schiller sees in this conviction of the fact of novelty something in accord with the demands of religion, as is implied in part in the doctrine of "creation out of nothing." "A world of which the Being is constant and fixed has one great irremediable defect. It cannot change for the better because it cannot really change at all."

Notwithstanding this belief in the possibility and actuality of the origination of the genuinely new, it must not be supposed that Schiller is blind to the apparent fixity of much in existence. Thus, in a small volume published recently, entitled *Tantalus*,

or the Future of Man, he maintains that biologically man has long ago ceased to be a progressive species. This "arrest of biological development" is "the greatest mystery in the history of man." But is it really true? Are not innumerable subtle physiological changes continually occurring leading to important differences in human sensitivity and so to radical modifications in the ideals of life which, even in accordance with Pragmatist Humanism, are fundamental in relation to the nature of our experience? In a somewhat despondent tone he expresses the opinion that modern man mentally and morally is little different from his palæolithic ancestors; and that his civilisation goes no deeper than his clothes. While it seems that in large measure this despondent strain in Schiller's present thought is due to a failure to estimate at its true value the difference of the general level of life and culture between modern and ancient peoples, and Occidental and Oriental peoples, there is much which is important in his analysis of existing conditions. It does seem true that there is a tendency making for degeneration in the present "relatively inadequate rate of reproduction of higher strata of society" and the too rapid increase in the lower strata. Even that, however, is to some extent counter-balanced by the fact that just in the moral effort of climbing up from the lower strata—and not simply by birth in an upper stratum—certain types of human excellence are achieved, and advance made. A

philosophy which seems to place so much stress upon human freedom, upon purpose and moral effort, as Pragmatist Humanism does, cannot rightly throw quite so much weight on "scientific eugenics," as Schiller seems to in this recent work.

Real human selves with real choice between real alternatives implying thus an existence which is not fixed once and for all in every characteristic and every detail are not compatible with the theological conceptions based upon an Absolutist metaphysic. What then is the conception of God which fits the facts of our experience and what are the relations of man and God? But, first, why believe in God at all? First one is led to it by the notion of cause: God is the non-phenomenal Cause of the world-process. If cause is only known in and of persons, God as cause is to be considered as personal. Further, in that existence seems to have meaning only in terms of purpose, God may be thought of as related with that purpose, for purpose can exist only in the intelligence of a personal being. God can be conceived most appropriately along the lines of the highest we know, and that which we know as real, that is, the self. But selves though intrinsically real are related: there is co-operation and opposition between them. God is experienced as related to us: He is a person among persons, one among the many.

The current conceptions of God appear to Schiller a "self-contradictory jumble of inconsistent

elements." That is a view which has much to justify it. For the prevailing ideas of God are derived in part from considerations of actual religious needs and experience and in part from conclusions of abstract philosophy. From the standpoint of his Pragmatist Humanism, Schiller would free the conception of deity from a number of terms supposed to imply attributes, terms which are of doubtful, if any, positive meaning and of no practical significance. The chief of these, one which is also implied in several others, more specific, is the term "infinite."

No one has yet made clear what the term infinite really implies, especially as applied in the realm of theological ideas. The claims of some mathematicians to have found an intelligible use of the term are accepted chiefly by themselves: others being of opinion that their explanations do not carry us beyond the finite. Schiller has discussed this subject from many points of view which cannot be referred to here. He takes the negative implication as the correct one. If we are thinking with reference to the category of quantity, an infinite quantity is then "not a finite quantity," and the only meaning seems to be not a quantity such as we experience. Or it may even be contended with some show of reason that the very category of quantity implies finitude. Then the expression an "infinite quantity" is self-contradictory and meaningless. But it is still possible, even probable, that in the realm of phraseology applied in religion, the term has

reference to a qualitative character of the Object of religious worship. Such quality may be just that which, when the individual becomes aware of it, arouses him to reverence and worship, and thus is quite other than an Unknowable. Schiller's assertion that "The worship of the Infinite is an idolatry precisely on a par with the reverence for the Unknowable," suggests his ability to see an essential similarity with an inability to notice a fundamental difference.

There is in the experience of religion something of the mystical and the mysterious, something of the poetic, of an elevation of one's feelings to greater heights and greater intensity. It is not strange, therefore, that terms which themselves are indefinite and of mysterious significance, high-sounding and poetic, are accepted as somehow true in relation to this experience. Objection is rightly made against such expressions in a pseudo-philosophical form. Schiller says that "The vulgar hear and admire such explanations of things as that 'the Absolute can realise itself only in the world,' that 'the history of the world is the process whereby the Absolute returns into itself enriched.' " Thanks, however, in no small measure to Schiller's own work, there are not now many claiming to be or regarded as philosophical who would content themselves with these "flimsiest metaphors of a very sorry anthropomorphism." Nevertheless, the grounds for rejection of such phraseology do not justify us in the view

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that a term like "infinite" has no positive significance when used in relation with religion.

Conceiving of God as a personality, the Object of love and reverence, Schiller accepts the attribution to Him of the quality of goodness. Unable to deny the reality of evil without being involved in pure Scepticism or irrationality, he is unable to accept the view that God is at the same time good and infinite in power in the sense of able to do all that is conceivable. For a perfect world is not inconceivable, because it is conceived. So God, regarded as good, is to be considered as limited in power. That is a better way of putting the position than to say with Schiller, that "God is finite," since though limited in power God may in some other specific qualitative manner be said to be infinite.

After the hollow word-play of Robert Browning and Alfred Tennyson among the poets, and the sham optimism of the conceptual abstractionism of the Absolute Idealists, it was a stimulating and hopeful experience to find again a philosophical thinker who was prepared to take evil seriously, whatever the problems which this might raise for his thought. It is necessary to insist with Schiller that if at our level and in our circumstances evil is as real as any other part of our experience, it is no consolation at all to be told that from the point of view of God or of the Absolute, "all is good." Indeed, that may even be felt to be a mockery, leading to our disgust of an Absolute or God who keeps us

at this level, or whose enjoyment of perfection involves our experience of evil as a factor in that perfection.

God as good is active within the process of history in which He is in relation with others of the Many which constitute Reality. An examination of the nature of evil gives grounds for believing that it is fighting a losing battle. The process of history is one of interaction of the Many towards increasing co-operation and harmony with one another, and the Divine goodness. Through this interaction a significant Unity, not a merely abstract and conceptual one, is to be attained. And as a matter of fact we may in large measure find throughout the processes of evolution and of history a persistent tendency in one main direction.

Schiller has failed to recognise any significance in the term "infinite," except a negative one, but he feels able to accept the notion of "eternity." But it may be maintained that there is a close affinity between the notion of eternity and that qualitative sense of the term infinite which we have suggested is its use in the realm of religious terminology. For Pragmatist Humanism time is essentially real, and eternity is not its negation. Eternity may be conceived to be a state to which in the process of evolution time, as it were, expands.

At one point in his exposition Schiller touches on an aspect of experience which to most individuals must at one time or another occasion serious

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questioning. It is the different capacities and the unequal endowments of individual souls. Schiller makes this a reason for the non-acceptance of the theory of their Divine creation. He feels that such inequalities are not compatible with Divine justice. And the difference can hardly be regarded as due to varying degrees of excellence in the Divine work. In consequence he is led, on these supposed ethical grounds, to the view that souls are not created, and this conforms with his pluralistic theory of their being ultimate existences. Nevertheless it does not seem that he has thought this subject out very thoroughly. For if there is Divine creation of many souls, for them to be a many, each must have some distinctive characteristic or characteristics. And it cannot be supposed that the nature of the characteristics is something merely arbitrary. The natures of the souls must, we are justified in supposing, have some relation to some general plan or purpose in the whole. Pluralism itself must suppose that the selves are at the outset (the expression is inappropriate) either with or without distinction, either with or without particular peculiarities. If the latter, it is a serious question as to how they could ever become differentiated. If the former, it is an equally difficult question how it happens that their differences have been such as to make a world with more or less order and purpose out of their association. On a pluralistic view it would be at least as likely that the differences would be such as to

make co-operation and a significant world impossible. With regard to the question of divine justice two things may be said. We are not able to compare accurately the happiness or satisfaction of one self with that of another, and, further, we cannot be said to have the whole account of any individual before us, since what the future may bring is unknown. On the other hand, if there are injustices, Pluralism has also to admit them, even though it may be relieved of any implication of deity in them.

A markedly pluralistic tone is evident in the works of *Herbert Wildon Carr*,¹ influenced first by Bergson and later by Croce and Gentile, but his views on unity and apparently also on truth differentiate him definitely from the type of Pragmatist Humanism of this chapter.

The theory of Pluralism is regarded by Pragmatist Humanism as providing the only secure basis for a belief in immortality. For it all selves are permanent ultimate existences. Such a view obviously involves some kind of pre-existence to this life on earth as well as a continuance after what we here call death. To us, however, there appears to be a complete oblivion between any former existence and our present one, and it may reasonably be asked whether there might not be a similar discontinuity between this and the next. In such case, there being

¹ *A Theory of Monads. Outlines of the Philosophy of the Principle of Relativity.* London, 1922.
The Philosophy of Change. London, 1914.

no conscious continuity, the persistence, as on McTaggart's view, is not essentially other than that which might be affirmed of merely physical atoms of a materialistic universe. Of course the nature of the selves in each life is vastly different from that of any such atoms, but for each there would be no greater significance in their sequence. The implications of the theory so far would not meet the emotional needs and the purpose of those who insist on the necessity of a belief in immortality to give meaning to their lives and to human history. Pragmatist Humanism is aware of this and endeavours to meet the difficulty by regarding memory as a matter of degree, so that according to it there might be gradations in immortality in this fuller sense. But however that may be, it is convinced that to assert ultimate extinction as the end of all beings is finally to renounce faith in the rationality of things. Pragmatist Humanism would rather base its inspiration to effort on the conviction of the permanent reality of the selves ; on belief in the immortality of the good and the transitoriness of evil.

CHAPTER V

REALISM

WITH the decline of the influence of Absolute Idealism and the inability of Pragmatist Humanism to obtain any widespread support, certain other types of philosophical thought began to come once more into prominence. These are in many respects characteristically British, and may best be described as forms of Realism. Though modern British Realism is not a distinctly new attitude, it is certainly true to say that contemporary Realist thinkers are in the main more circumspect than their earlier forerunners. They are more careful with regard both to what they assert and to what they deny. It is important to remember that since the days of the Scottish Common-sense School, there has been a series of thinkers who, like John Stuart Mill, Croom Robertson, Henry Sidgwick, Carveth Read, George Dawes Hicks and Samuel Alexander in recent times, have adopted a definitely critical attitude to Absolute Idealism and any form of thought which seemed to be able to be charged with subjectivism.

The emergence of Realism into a vigorous and increasingly supported movement in contemporary British thought has not been due simply to a growing

intellectual dissatisfaction with forms of Idealism. It is part of a general tendency in modern British life. During the last twenty-five years the effects of compulsory primary education have really begun to make themselves felt, for the majority of the middle-aged to-day are the children of those who had first enjoyed some measure of such education. One result of widespread elementary education is to centre the attention of the masses upon the varieties of physical values and to arouse desire for their attainment. At the same time there has been an immense increase in the rapidity and in the amount of production of physical things which make for comfort and physical enjoyment. In almost every direction the advances in applied science have been enormous, and in many directions the results achieved have impressed the popular imagination. Even before the war, as the first years of the century passed by, it was becoming more and more true that, as never before, "things were in the saddle and rode mankind." The attitude which prevails is one directed much more to the world of external objects than to the world of apparently subjective feelings.

In isolated circles among philosophical thinkers, Realism had begun to reassert itself quite definitely before the war. The war did much to hasten its becoming a more general movement. For in the war it was evident that we were "up against" stern realities, in contrast with which idealisms, whether ethical or metaphysical, appeared to be merely

verbal. The mental and the spiritual seemed to be entirely at the mercy of gunpowder, poison-gas and steel. Relief from the horrors of war and relief from the strain of overwork in factories at home, was sought mainly in physical enjoyments. By comparison those who sought consolation in religion were few: for there was almost as much doubt concerning the existence or the goodness of God—who could permit such atrocities—as there was belief in His overruling power. The superficial Idealism of popular religious teachers was ineffective in these circumstances, and in the Universities themselves Idealism began to lose its hold. Forms of Realism are now beginning to get more and more representation on the staffs of the Universities, and Realism may be expected for a period to wield an influence on the students of philosophy and on general thought in the Universities and so increasingly in wider circles beyond them.

From the time of the classical Idealism of Germany to that of the British Idealism of the opening of the period with which we are concerned, philosophy had endeavoured to obtain a comprehensive view, embracing all facts and values. Not merely forms of Idealism but also the Synthetic Philosophy of Herbert Spencer had tried to present a view of the Whole. But influences were at work leading away from the consideration of the nature of the Whole to the investigation of details. Most of these philosophies included a conception of evolution,

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implying nothing more than a process, real or apparent, from a so-called lower to a so-called higher level. The worth of such a general conception became the subject of serious doubt when the impetus which was given to the study of biology by the work of Alfred Russel Wallace and Charles Darwin led to inquiry into actual processes. Intensive scientific study raised many important problems of which the earlier conceptions of evolution gave no suggestion and to which they supplied no answer.

These problems, such as those concerned with the causes of variation, and with the possibility of the transmission of acquired characters, were suggested by the observation and consideration of actual facts, and it was felt that only with closer observation of these facts by careful scientific methods could any reliable answer be obtained to them. The inadequacy, and in some respects inaccuracy, of the general notion of evolution prevalent in philosophical literature became more and more apparent, and the need of scientific method definitely recognised. It is one of the merits of the philosophy of James Ward that it takes into account the implications of advancing biological science. He sees that the problems must be approached by consideration of particular facts.

As in biology, so to an even greater extent in physics and in chemistry attention has become concentrated on details, without a careful investig-

ation of which it does not seem possible to obtain trustworthy conclusions. A revival in the study of mathematics has focussed attention on the individual problems at the very basis of the science. In every sphere, in biology, in physics, in chemistry, in mathematics, it has become more and more evident that knowledge comes by submission to facts. Scientific knowledge is seen to have a definitely objective character. As compared with the sciences, the teachings of Idealism and of Pragmatist Humanism seem to accord a quite unjustifiable influence to the subject in knowledge. For Idealism thought is fundamental and in its essence constructive: knowledge a construction of thought out of the data of experience. Science, it is maintained on the other hand, is not so much a construction of but a discovery by thought. It is not, "as we think the world so we find it"; but, "as we find the world so we think, or should think it."

With the increasing recognition of the complexity of the details there is increasing distrust of all attempts at system-making. The broad generalisations, the alleged ultimate principles, which were appealed to by the philosophical and theological thinkers of the past, are largely neglected or virtually rejected by many of this group of Realistic thinkers. Whether Realism must eventually come to acknowledge ultimate conceptions concerning the unity and significance of experience or be doomed to lose

the threads of intelligibility in a maze of existent particulars and of subsistent universals must remain to be seen. For the present it appears to be engaged not merely in pulling down the houses of cards which earlier system-makers have built up, but even in tearing the cards into the largest possible number of individual pieces. The greatest interest and the keenest discussion might almost be said to be aroused by the problem of the nature and status of *sensa*. Even then, while the general conviction is shared that the so-called physical world has a reality of its own and does not depend for its existence or nature upon mind, there is a great diversity of views concerning the character of our knowledge of that world, and consequently of the nature of that world itself. Along with this there is a reluctance to admit the significance of the emotions which lead to a desire and hope for a spiritual life transcending the immediacies of the physical and the present order of earthly existence. Nevertheless, in spite of this almost naturalistic character which contemporary British Realism most generally assumes, it may be suggested that it is by no means necessarily bound up with such an attitude. It may indeed be surmised that a wider Realism will be evolved which, applying the essential principles of its method to the facts of the religious life, will insist on the acknowledgement of another order of realities than those of universal concepts, physical objects and finite selves.

Perhaps the first definite signal of this increasing Realistic revolt against Idealism was an article by *George Edward Moore*,¹ published in *Mind* in 1903, almost at the beginning of our period, entitled, "The Refutation of Idealism." Although he now says that the paper seems to him to "embody a good many downright mistakes," it at least indicates his rejection of the Idealist contention "*esse is percipi*." Since that time Moore has continued an outstanding thinker in the school of contemporary British Realism. His work is marked by the meticulous care he takes in analysing every concept or proposition he has especially to deal with. His discussion consists very largely in inquiring in every such instance into all the possible meanings and implications and then, by a process of critical discrimination, showing to what extent each may if at all be regarded as justifiable. In Moore we see, as in no other representative of the school, the application of its most essential method, the careful isolation of each fact or concept in so far as it is necessary to acquaint oneself with its own distinctive character or meaning. For Realism the distinctive is fundamental. Over its portals might be inscribed the significant though apparently trite aphorism: "Each thing is itself and not some other thing."

Moore came to the study of philosophy from the

¹ *Principia Ethica*. Cambridge, 1903.
Philosophical Studies. London, 1922.

side of the Greek Classics. It is not surprising, therefore, to find much suggestive of Aristotle and perhaps even more of Platonism in his views. Thus apart from the other discussions contained in his *Principia Ethica*, two things are taught which appear essential to the method of contemporary Realism. Good is ultimately something of its own character. It is itself and not some other thing. It is intrinsic. As such it is indefinable: it can be defined in no other terms than itself. Good in this ultimate sense must be distinguished from "good as a means," which it would be an advantage to term simply "useful." In the second place, it is evident that good is a universal. This almost Platonic insistence on the acknowledgement of universals indicates at once how different contemporary British Realism is from the earlier Materialism. Whatever else constitutes reality, universals have at least some share in it.

Reid, the Scottish opponent of Berkeleyan Idealism and of the Scepticism of Hume, wrote a volume entitled *Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense*, maintaining, as Moore does, that the object of true knowledge is in a sense independent of our knowing of it. Recently Moore has himself published "A Defence of Common Sense." What Moore does in this essay is to enumerate a series of propositions, embodied in what he calls the "common-sense experience of the world," which he says he knows with certainty to

be true, and which are, moreover, held by all other philosophers. His position differs from that of many others not in what he affirms, but in what others affirm beyond these things, affirmations which he contends are inconsistent with what he and they hold in common. While he is confident of the truth of these propositions of the common-sense experience of the world, he is sceptical as to the correct analysis of these propositions. So, for example, he says, "Just as I hold that the proposition 'There are and have been material things,' is quite certainly true, but that the question how this proposition is to be analysed is one to which no answer that has been hitherto given is anywhere near certainly true; so I hold that the proposition, 'There are and have been many Selves,' is quite certainly true, but that here again all the analyses of this proposition that have been suggested by philosophers are highly doubtful."

The list of "truisms" which Moore professes to know with certainty to be true contains a description of what will generally be admitted to be common-sense experience. It contains, for example, such propositions as the following: "There exists at present a living human body, which is *my* body"; "Ever since it was born, it has been in contact with or not far from the surface of the earth." Among the things which have formed part of its environment have been large numbers of other living human bodies, "each of which has, like it, (*a*) at

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some time been born, (*b*) continued to exist for some time after birth, (*c*) been, at every moment of its life after birth, either in contact with or not far from the surface of the earth ; many of these have already died and ceased to exist." " I have had expectations with regard to the future, and many beliefs of other kinds, both true and false ; I have thought of imaginary things and persons and incidents, in the reality of which I did not believe ; I have had dreams ; and I have had feelings of many different kinds." And so on. In addition Moore claims to know as certainly true that some human beings belonging to the class which includes himself have known with regard to themselves propositions corresponding to each of the propositions he has written down in his list of propositions relating to himself.

To the question whether he really *knows* these propositions to be true he confesses he has " nothing better to say than that it seems to me that I *do* know them, with certainty." " We are all, I think, in this strange position that we do *know* many things, with regard to which we *know* further that we must have had evidence for them, and yet we do not know *how* we know them, *i.e.* we do not know what the evidence was." It seems to him that he does know, for certain, that there is a " we," that is, that many other human beings with human bodies have lived upon the earth. Similarly it is only on his certainty of the truth of these propositions of common-sense

experience that he bases his view that space and time, which might have been not-real, are in fact not so. Consequently his position may be described as the "Common-sense view of the world," certain fundamental features of which he accepts as *wholly* true.

All philosophers do and must in some manner admit common-sense experience. What Moore criticises are the results of their attempts to analyse it. Against the Idealist contentions he maintains that there is no sufficient reason to believe that all physical facts are logically or causally dependent upon mental facts. It cannot be shown that each and every particular physical fact would not conceivably have been unless a mental fact had been, or has not been unless a mental fact has been. When Moore says that he perceives an object, he appears to imply that he perceives some part of its surface, which part is for him representative of the object.

Though Moore accepts as certainly true the propositions descriptive of common-sense experience; though he insists upon recognition of universals as such and on the reality of physical objects as not dependent on mental facts; though he is equally convinced of the reality of other selves, there his admissions seem to stop. He sees no good reason for supposing that all material things were created by God, or even that there is a God at all. Neither does he find any good reason for supposing that

human beings continue to exist and be conscious after the death of their bodies. These latter statements have about them a distinctly personal character. But even then there still remains a problem worth considering, how or why such ideas as deity and immortality have arisen. In fact it may well be maintained that the whole of Moore's position is a definitely personal one. It is based on the contention that he knows certain propositions relating to his physical body, the external world, other selves, to be certainly true. On analogy with this, it is quite possible for others to contend that they know certain propositions relating to deity and immortality to be certainly true. In any case it is scarcely satisfactory to leave all that religion is and has been in history out of account in trying to answer the philosophical question of the nature of truth and reality.

Associated with Moore, and admittedly largely influenced by him, is *Bertrand Russell*,¹ supposedly one of the keenest of modern British intellects. A pioneer in the revival of the study of the fundamental

¹ *Philosophical Essays*. London, 1910; 2nd ed., as *Mysticism and Logic*, 1918.

The Problem of Philosophy. London, 1912.

Our Knowledge of the External World as a Field for Scientific Method in Philosophy. Chicago, 1914.

The Analysis of Mind. London, 1924.

Icarus, or the Future of Science. London, 1924.

What I believe. London, 1925; and many other works on mathematics and social subjects.

principles of mathematics, his enthusiasm and powers as a conversationalist, his wide interests in social problems, and his independence of spirit manifested conspicuously during the war, have all helped to give him a position in the public mind which it may be doubted whether his philosophical disquisitions could justify. In spite of the severity of his intellect, Russell's writings often show considerable emotional force. The somewhat rapidly increasing number of his books adds to rather than diminishes the difficulty of coming to a clear understanding of his position.

According to Russell the classical tradition in philosophy has been thrust aside not so much as a result of intellectual argument as by a revolt of the activist traits of human nature. This contention notwithstanding, Russell does not favour any form of pragmatic or quasi-pragmatic justification of beliefs which satisfy the demands of man in action. In his earlier essays he gives a detailed criticism of Pragmatist Humanism. Pragmatist Humanism makes a confusion between acting on a hypothesis and definitely believing it to be true. It implies that in order to judge whether a judgement is true one has only to discover if it tends to the satisfaction of desire. With such a principle every judgement must be liable to continual revision, for what suits our purposes at one time may not suit them at another: hence Pragmatism is virtually in essence Scepticism, as it cannot be known how long its

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propositions will remain useful. Pragmatist Humanism is in its tone in harmony with the spirit of the time. It has a firm belief in human power; it feels confident of progress; it loves battle, having no doubt of ultimate victory. In its refusal to admit finality it accords well with the implication of evolution. Nevertheless, Russell charges it with being too narrow in its outlook: "To men who do not find Man an adequate object of worship, the Pragmatist world will seem narrow and petty, robbing life of all that gives it value, and making Man himself smaller by depriving the universe which he contemplates of all its splendour."

Although he suggests that the Realism of modern times is very largely impregnated with the same spirit, Russell prefers to style his own philosophy Logical Atomism. This is a type of thought which "has gradually crept into philosophy through the critical scrutiny of mathematics." Logical Atomism, like Realism, insists on full recognition of the objective. For example, with reference to truth, judgement is a relation of the mind to several other terms, so that when these have a "corresponding" relation the judgement is true, and when not it is false. The truth and falsehood of a judgement do not depend upon the mind which makes it. Russell thinks that a genuine philosophy has to be free from all "practical taint": it must be inspired by disinterested intellectual curiosity. When he asks, therefore, what shall be the data of philosophy, he

replies that it is safest to take science. "In science there are many matters about which people are agreed: in philosophy there are none."

Following out this principle he severely restricts the scope of philosophy. It is not to "attempt to offer a solution of the problem of human destiny, or of the destiny of the universe." In fact he doubts whether the claim of philosophy to have a method of its own different from that of science is not an unfortunate legacy from theology. The essence of philosophy is logic, not the old logic "which puts thought in fetters," but new logic which "gives it wings." As opposed to the earlier empiricists, it is maintained that there is some general knowledge not derived from sense, and that such general knowledge is to be found in logic. It must, however, be confessed that such general knowledge as is referred to by Russell does not suggest that the "wings" have succeeded in raising thought or carrying it far.

Even in the next section of the book in which these claims are made, *Our Knowledge of the External World as a Field for Scientific Method in Philosophy*, Russell gets back to earth again. And even here he does not appear to find a very firm resting-place. For he arrives at the simple position that there are no grounds *against* the truth of his hypothetical construction. He resorts to the question of evidence from other selves, only to find that their existence is a "working hypothesis." As he must rest some-

where, he falls back on common-sense belief: "In actual fact, whatever we may try to think as philosophers, we cannot help believing in the minds of other people, so that the question whether our belief is justified has a merely speculative interest." For him, therefore, the belief in many minds is simply an unproved prejudice. And it is on the ground of the amount of agreement of such supposed minds in science that he accepts the data of science as the data for philosophy!

There is much that is mere platitude in Russell's exposition. It is supposed to be necessary to say that the task of philosophy is to criticise and clarify notions apt to be accepted uncritically as fundamental; that it is essentially logical analysis followed by logical synthesis. But the type of logic must be that which gives thought "wings"! "Philosophy should be comprehensive, and should be bold in suggesting hypotheses as to the universe which science is not yet in a position to confirm or confute." It is chimerical to hope for certainty in philosophy, for, says Russell, "certainty in metaphysics seems unattainable." And what indeed is "certainty," if the analysis of mind shows its constituents to be only *sensa* and images, somewhat surreptitiously "accompanied" by "feelings" of reality, of belief and of familiarity?

If what Russell has so far put before us is an example of the result of so-called scientific method in philosophy, there is little need for regret at the

inability to obtain certainty in metaphysics. Admittedly in all our interpretations of experience we should leave the details unchanged, and we may well believe that the actual structure of reality is "more fine-grained" than is so far observed by common sense or by science. But it helps us not at all to describe reality as though a neutral "stuff." And the "new" logic which gives "wings" to thought ought to be less blatantly announced if it assists us to nothing more "new" or impressive than the conclusion: "The world consists of a number, perhaps finite, perhaps infinite, of entities which have various relations to each other, and perhaps also various qualities. Each of these entities may be called an 'event.' " But perhaps it is something worth while to have an admission of infinity, together with the insistence that its nature cannot be apprehended by counting. On the other hand, though the positive theory of infinity expounded by Russell may be acceptable to mathematicians, it is not likely to satisfy that common sense upon which he falls back in accepting the reality of other minds. Indeed, his exposition appears a muddle, assuming infinity or not obtaining freedom from the ideas of adding to and taking from. Realism and Logical Atomism may do well to acknowledge infinity as a positive concept, but it will need much more critical reflection than has yet been spent on it to come to an apprehension of its nature and its relations, if any, to the world of

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particular entities or events. It may perchance be found that while finite numbers have reference to these entities or events, infinity as positive has reference solely to a reality of the religious experience which Realists too frequently neglect.

Seeing that philosophy is so uncertain and its results so meagre, what is it that science teaches us? According to Russell, that Man is but "the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms"; and that "the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the débris of a universe in ruins." "So nearly certain" is this, that every philosophy which hopes to stand must take account of it. But is it really "so nearly certain" that Man is the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms? That there *may* be an end to the present form of the physical earth and all that is physical upon it can be admitted by every philosophy, but it is to go beyond what science can legitimately assert to say that it is inevitable that the whole of Man's achievement shall be buried beneath the débris. Yet, faced with this somewhat tragic view of things, Russell in his Essay on "A Free Man's worship" writes with the dignity and fire of a full-blooded man of middle age. Man may strive for his ideal and assert his inner freedom against the vagaries of unconscious power, "omnipotent matter," though often it is through the Gate of Renunciation that the daylight of wisdom is to be reached. "To abandon the struggle for private happiness, to expel all

eagerness of temporary desire, to burn with passion for eternal things—this is emancipation, and this is the free man's worship. And this liberation is effected by a contemplation of Fate; for Fate itself is subdued by the mind which leaves nothing to be purged by the purifying fire of Time." What one is impelled to ask is whether, after all, Man, who can carry on the pursuits of science and mathematics, can love his fellows, appreciate beauty, and assume such an attitude as Russell depicts, is really nothing more than the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms.

Convinced of the need of examining thoroughly the foundations and the data of knowledge and warned by the failure of the great system-makers in the history of human thought, most contemporary British Realists do not profess to be able to give a comprehensive view. This general rule has been broken by *Samuel Alexander*,¹ who in his Gifford Lectures, *Space, Time and Deity*, endeavours to give what may not unfairly be described as a realistic account of existence as a whole. Though in sheer bulk the appearance of this work is formidable, no fear of a charge of impossibility of doing full justice to it in the space available should prevent us from indicating some of the salient features, as illustrative of the boldest and most elaborate exposition of a form of contemporary British Realism.

¹ *Space, Time and Deity*. Gifford Lectures. London, 1920.

Realism, as Alexander understands it, challenges the right of Idealism to make mind the measure of all things and the starting-point of inquiry. Realism adopts the empirical method, and this starts out, at least as a hypothesis, with the common-sense point of view according to which minds and external things are co-ordinate members of a common world. Physical things and minds are groups among the existences of the world. The object is taken as an existence distinct from the mind which contemplates it, and in that sense independent of the mind. When Alexander goes further and says that "there is nothing in the compresence between the mind and its objects to distinguish that relation from the compresence between the objects which it contemplates, like the tree and the grass," it may be asked whether this is true; whether by such a statement he is not ignoring some of the most difficult of epistemological and metaphysical problems; whether, in fact, he is not begging the whole question as between his form of Realism on the one hand and Idealism on the other.

The common character of existence is Space-Time. It is wrong to suppose that Space is ever actually found without Time, or Time without Space. "Space-Time, the universe in its primordial form, is the stuff out of which all existents are made." "In truth, infinite Space-Time is not the substance of substances, but it is the stuff of substances. No word is more appropriate to it than the ancient

one of *hyle* (ὕλη)." This *stuff* has no quality except that of being spatio-temporal or motion. But one passes to language more reminiscent of the jargon of bygone metaphysicians than of modern Realism in the description of Time as the mind of Space. And to say that "Time is discovered to supply the element in Space without which Space would be a blank," is an unfortunate and simply fogging way of expressing the fact that, at any time space is experienced, it is experienced as not-empty.

From or otherwise in Space-Time qualities emerge. "Space-Time of its own nature breaks up into finites." So it is that matter forms: "Matter is a finite complex of Space-Time with the material quality." One might suppose that all Realism is justified in affirming is the emergents simply as found. Alexander goes beyond this. For example, he says of life as an emergent (*italics ours*) that it "is still also *entirely* physico-chemical," which is surely an assumption. This form of assertion permeates the whole exposition. "Each new type of existence when it emerges is expressible completely or without residue in terms of the lower stage, and therefore indirectly in terms of all lower stages; mind in terms of living process, life in terms of physico-chemical process, sense quality, like colour in terms of matter with its movements, matter itself in terms of motion." Of all of which it must be asked: Is it true? Similarly, in spite of his lengthy discussion, there seems a false simplicity

about the contention that causality is nothing more than "the spatio-temporal continuity of one substance with another."

Alexander makes a truly remarkable attempt to elucidate the nature of universals and the character of their relation to particulars. Fundamentally it comes to the contention that there is no real difficulty, since both universals and particulars and their relation are of the same nature, that is, of the nature of Space-Time. Particulars are "complexes of Space-Time." Universals "are plans of Space-Time." What could be simpler? But perhaps after all it is not so simple even for Alexander. Thus, while the statement may sound "extreme," "the universals are spatio-temporal, physical, biological, mental according to the level of existence to which their individuals belong." "In this sense we must say, *though the full meaning cannot be developed at present* (italics ours), that universals of physical things are physical, and that the universal man though it is not a man is man or human." But, surely, here there is just the same type of ignoring of epistemological and metaphysical difficulties as is involved in the assertion that there is nothing to distinguish the compresence of mind and its objects from the compresence between the objects it contemplates. The impression is given that Alexander's mind is overwhelmingly that of a "visualiser," and that he is more or less unable to appreciate the character of the ideational as such,

but always replaces it by a form of visual imagery of the objects in Space-Time to which it may have some reference.

Our belief in and knowledge of other minds is not ultimately based upon analogy. Alexander insists that for the recognition of others there must be "some direct experience of other minds." The knowledge of ourselves and the knowledge of others grow up together. This consciousness of other minds, this direct experience of something like ourselves, comes in our relations with one another. Alexander talks here of "social feeling," but his meaning seems the same as is expressed by the American sociologist Giddings as "consciousness of kind." "It is because we are social beings and have the social instinct that we become aware of others as like ourselves and the possessors of minds."

It has been seen that Alexander's Realism has something of the character of a theory of emergent evolution. The evolution begins, as it were, with bare Space-Time, though by calling Time the mind of Space, the impression given is that the process is a psycho-physical one. In fact it is maintained later in the exposition that mind and body exemplify a relation which holds universally. But Space-Time is restless, and this restlessness leads to the different levels of emergents. Intelligence, rationality, beauty, the love of man for man, and all that makes the best of experience have arisen apparently from the

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non-intelligible perpetual shuffle of Space-Time. Though perchance more metaphysical in its presentation, this scheme does not represent much advance upon that of Spencer with his homogeneous plenum and suggestion of a non-rational advance up to the rational.

The highest emergent so far known as attained is mind. But Space-Time is still restless, and will, presumably, always be restless. It strains to what is "beyond mind." Alexander talks of the whole as creative, but the process of creation of the next highest is through the present highest. Hence, if man is the present highest known, it is through man that the next highest is to be attained by the whole. It would seem that mind, after all, gets some recognition of its eminence!

Alexander is too broad-minded a man, and a philosopher too wide awake to ultimate problems to imagine that any philosophy can be regarded as adequate which does not seriously attempt to understand religion, and the concepts of deity and immortality which have arisen in connection therewith. He gives us, therefore, an account of the concepts of God and deity which he considers to accord best with his general description of reality. Whether this account accords with the actual experience of religion is a question which demands close consideration.

The God of religion is obviously for it a reality. God is the reality with a distinctive quality, that of

deity. Now Alexander implies that the God of religion is the Whole with the quality of deity, for that which has not the quality of deity cannot be God. The Whole, other than the deity, is the body of God: the deity is the soul. The question arises: What is the quality of deity? Deity is the next higher stage beyond the level actually reached: it is that to which restless Space-Time is straining. As the highest reached is said to be mind, deity is something other than, something more than mind. Deity is not yet attained, and as it will always be beyond whatever stage is attained, it never will be attained. Deity never "is," but always "will be." Thus, as at any given time, the Whole will not have the quality of deity, it cannot be truly God, and another account must be given of what the religious consciousness takes for God. "There is no actual infinite being with the quality of deity, but there is an actual infinite, the whole universe with a *nisus* to deity, and this is the God of the religious consciousness." Postponing discussion of this last assertion, it is well to quote another statement of Alexander's view. "In the hierarchy of qualities the next higher quality to the highest attained is deity. God is the whole universe engaged in process towards the emergence of this new quality, and religion is the sentiment in us that we are drawn towards him and caught in the movement of the world to a higher level of existence." The essence of the belief in immortality is simply

our faith in the continuance of this movement after our own death.

Strive as he will Alexander cannot get away from a naturalistic bias. Nevertheless it is too great a demand on human credulity to ask it to accept the view that by a fortuitous restlessness of Space-Time, the different emergents, including man with his rationality, have arisen. It is even more difficult to see how rational beings, who as such are supposed to be guided by rational ideas, shall worship, strive towards, produce the next higher stage, that is, deity, when this is presumably as qualitatively different from mind as mind from life and life from matter, when it is virtually an unknown x . Deity is more than mind, and it is to be created through us. But as we are not aware of the character of that which is more than mind: how are we to create it? Evidently the creation is to be achieved by the restlessness of the whole of Space-Time: seemingly by a process as fortuitous as that which led to the rationality of man. And, let it not be forgotten, that when the stage beyond man is attained, deity will apparently be as far off as ever.

And who knows whether, having come so far with the restlessness of Space-Time, the process may not tend towards sataninity rather than deity? The restlessness of Space-Time savours more of the irritability of the devil than of the peace of God. Or may it not perchance be that rationality having been attained, the restlessness of Space-Time may

eventually take a reverse course, such as that which Bertrand Russell says is the teaching of science which is "so nearly certain"?

If one is to be true to the spirit of Realism, to its objectivity and its recognition of the distinctive character of empirical facts in the widest sense of the term empirical, the actual character of religious experience needs to be more carefully studied by these thinkers and the relevant facts admitted. Alexander's account does not seem to accord with the facts of religion, and yet it is because he thinks his philosophy fits those facts that he has developed it with regard to religion along the lines indicated. His view indeed seems in direct contradiction with actual religious experience, which affirms God with the quality of deity, which *actual* quality (not the mere *nisus* to the quality) arouses awe and reverence and, when correctly apprehended, love. That this quality is capable of no definition or description in terms of other qualities, that it is indefinable, is no argument for belief that no such quality is in fact apprehended.

If Alexander had proceeded along the line of his recognition of the direct apprehension of other minds, he might have been led to acknowledge the reasonableness of the contention of the direct apprehension of God in religion, as a distinctive reality with the actual quality of deity, not as the Whole with the never-to-be-fulfilled promise of the quality of deity. The process of evolution might then

appear to be not so much the result of the non-rational restlessness of Space-Time, as a realm in which a dominating purpose is gradually being achieved. But this would mean the abandonment of the naturalistic bias of his exposition, and the admission of the truth of some of the contentions of a Spiritual Theism.

In the same year in which Alexander's Gifford Lectures were published there also appeared a much less ambitious exposition of a realistic attitude by a much younger man, *John Laird*. Alexander's treatise, in spite of much which is quite modern, nevertheless, like Lloyd Morgan's exposition of Naturalism, leaves the definite impression of the thought of an earlier age. Laird's ¹ *Study of Realism* has the matter-of-factness typical of the cautiousness and restraint which characterises the thought of the most competent of contemporary British Realists. Like the work of Moore, it is content with freeing the common-sense view of experience on the one hand from common superficial assumptions, and on the other from the doubtful forms of philosophical interpretation and description which have been based upon incorrect analysis of it.

Realism, which as a philosophical attitude necessarily in many respects differs from that of the plain man, accepts, as Moore puts it, certain fundamental

¹ *Problems of the Self*. London, 1917.
A Study of Realism. Cambridge, 1920.

features of common-sense experience as wholly true. It maintains that things can be known as they really are, and, to quote Laird, "that anything is precisely what it appears to be when sufficient precautions have been taken to avoid confusion between the actual genuine appearance and spurious though plausible glosses upon it." It maintains that the existence and the character of the thing is not affected by the knowing of it. The mind does not import the synthesis in things perceived: what is "given" is not, as Kant suggests, a mere manifold. The "meaning" of the percept is not made by the mind, but simply known by it. Thus, says Laird, "I believe that we really do perceive tables and trees and such things."

Knowledge is not simply an affair of the senses. And to hold that all else besides *sensa* is imported by the mind is not justified. For not only the particulars of sense but also "general facts" are objective. "They confront the mind and reveal themselves to it. They are independent of our thinking, and they are literally discoverable as they are in themselves." Laird adopts the current terminology, that particulars *exist* and general facts or universals *subsist*. Realists find themselves in considerable difficulties with regard to the nature of universals and their relation to particulars. But in this they are no worse off than others, for no philosophy of the past or the present seems anywhere near a solution of this problem. Laird

frankly confesses: "The subsistence of general facts cannot be reduced to any characteristics of existence, nor conversely. If this dualism seems inevitable, there is no way of avoiding it." So with regard to causality, it is good to find a rejection of that type of falsely simple description which Alexander suggests. "Neither position by itself, nor succession by itself, nor these twain together can explain the causal connection of anything." "Relations are causal as well as spatial and temporal. If perception is evidence that a flame is ruddy, it is also evidence that fire burns."

What we perceive is never perceived in isolation: there is always a marginal environment. Our minds are finite, and "at the best" we "perceive a minute patch" or a number of patches of the world. The world of our belief is, therefore, not simply what we perceive and remember. It is "an interpretation of the things and events we have perceived or remember. It is reflection following out and giving full weight to perceived meanings. The world, it is true, is richer than our judgements because we perceive so little and reflect so ill."

Along with the reality of objects perceived, Realism admits the reality of mind, though there are considerable differences among Realists as to its nature. Alexander, for example, regards it as a complex, an emergent of Space-Time. Laird cautiously keeps nearer to what may be called enlightened common sense. "We are aware of our own con-

sciousness, and we can usually detect the signs of consciousness in others." On this basis he is right to insist that one who denies that we know what consciousness is, is beyond the pale of argument. Following Locke he maintains that "the mind can notice its own operations." Introspection is both possible and actual. The observation of the "stream of consciousness" leads to a knowledge of its personal form. It has a "personal unity," and as such calls itself "I." Though sleep seems to break the continuity the self "is distinctively individual in a way that is matched by nothing else that we know." Though in the lower stages of life the mental appears to be largely subservient to mere preservation, in man mind has ends which it pursues for its own sake. Thus implying a different attitude from that which seems suggested by Moore, Russell and Alexander, Laird maintains at least "that it is neither inconceivable nor even, perhaps, unlikely that minds are capable of discarnate existence." The view of the individual self as finite does not involve that it may not be directed towards the infinite. The Absolutist pretensions that in knowing the Infinite the mind is one with It must be rejected: but nothing of the actual excellence of the mind is thus denied. At the same time the other implication of Absolutism, that there can be nothing wholly true but the Whole Truth, must also be rejected. The finite self may be able to know only a small part of existence, but it may

rightly claim that any given judgement is wholly and finally true. Realists are "committed to a doctrine of logical pluralism." On the other hand, though Realists cannot accept the notion of the identity of consciousness with the Absolute, they can and it would seem must admit that the self is related with the rest of existence.

Realism insists on the acknowledgement of the objectivity of values. That in our apprehension of these and in our judgements in relation to them we may and do make mistakes is what those who argue that values are subjective fail to appreciate. Human actions, human character and human dispositions "are good or bad in a moral sense, and value or its opposite belongs to them in the same sense as redness belongs to a cherry." So, again, beauty is not merely felt: it is judged. "The values of beauty or its opposite belong to certain things in certain connections just as objectively as any other qualities." Realism admits the facts of error, of immorality, of ugliness: it implies "the full reality of good and evil as we find them. For the Realists, Borgia was a villain and Francis a saint. What is more, Borgia's wickedness was Borgia's affair." It is not known to be the work of the Universe. Realists, continues Laird, "may logically accept the facts which they find without referring to the whole which they do not know; and when they fight real abuses, they are not compelled to inquire into the perfection of reality as a whole."

With the acknowledgement of the reality of the external world, and of consciousness, of the objectivity of values, and of the subsistence of universals, Laird is inclined towards accepting also the reality of another order of existence, with which religion claims to be in part concerned. He asks: "Why should we deny that religious experience, and particularly mystical experience, is fundamentally a new way of knowing?" But it is some distance from asking such a question to the presentation of the case for the affirmation of such a way of knowing. Laird himself gives his attention to the examination of what appear extremely doubtful philosophical views associated with mysticism in the past and the present. There are good grounds for believing that contemporary British Realists have done much for a proper appreciation of human knowledge and experience in the realms in which they have so far been occupied. Mysticism also needs to be examined in accordance with the objective methods of Realism and in the light of its main principles.

A careful statement of the position of Realism has recently been given by *George Dawes Hicks* in an essay entitled "From Idealism to Realism."¹ This thinker, known as an authority on the philosophy of Kant, has for long been an acute student of questions concerning the theory of knowledge, but his writings are almost entirely published in the proceedings of

¹ In *Contemporary British Philosophy*, Vol. II.

learned societies and in periodicals. In the essay referred to he indicates what he considers to be the requirement of a Realism which may to-day claim "a respectful hearing." It must be "grounded on a theory of knowledge, in conformity to which it is possible to maintain that real things may be, and are, directly perceived, without owing either their being or their nature to the circumstances of such perception." This means that one has confidence that the mental processes of perceiving and any other processes connected with knowing do lead to real knowledge. He finds no genuine grounds in the nature of knowing as such for believing that it is incapacitated "for the work it has to do or to prevent it from approximating ever nearer and nearer to the truth of things." Through the ordinary methods of common sense, and presumably more accurately through the methods of closer observation and experiment in science, the human mind is attaining to a knowledge of the universe as it actually is.

If we trust our capacities for knowing, they seem to show us not merely that material things and mental lives are "fundamentally disparate in character," but that "the world is full of entities or modes of being, which are, in their way, no less disparate from one another in character than mind and matter." Such a statement may be regarded as an expression of what should be taken as a root principle of Realism: the acknowledgement in each

and every instance of the peculiar and the distinctive. It ought to be insisted that one is true to the spirit of Realism only when one is concerned to show how things differ, even though one may also show in what way they are similar. From this point of view it may be suggested that though contemporary British Realism claims to be in close association with Natural Science and to learn from it, there is a real need for natural scientists to recognise the implications of this root principle of Realism.

Although the different entities have distinctive characters, they are known to us as related, as forming in some sense a world. Order is, however, not introduced into knowledge by a self "equipped from the start with a whole armoury of categories." "Any apprehension of the orderly objective world is possible only through those psychical conditions which enable a connected consciousness of self to be attained." Nevertheless it is "not to the unity of the self, but to the orderly, connected uniform character of the given material which the self apprehends," that the first place must be given. The advance in the apprehension of the objective and the advance from the simplest mode of consciousness to the developed type of the reflective apprehension of the self are interdependent. Dawes Hicks declares that self-consciousness has "come to be by a process of development made possible by an external environment." It is a task of metaphysics to try to find how the contents of reality as known

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to us may be considered to form a system. For this it is not necessary to show that everything is "but a fragmentary manifestation" of one ultimate mode of being. From the standpoint of such a Realism the distinction between the phenomenal and the real is the distinction between the incompletely and the completely known.

The thought of *Charles Duncan Broad*¹ has close affinities with that of Realism, but his independence is shown in his acute critical examination of many of the positions of contemporary British Realists, and in his more comprehensive attitude of mind. While fully cognisant of the advance which Realism means in certain directions he is prepared to recognise the significance of Idealism. "The great merit of Idealism is that it really has tried to do justice to the social, ethical, æsthetic and religious facts of the world. The great merit of Realism is that it really has tried to face in a patient and detailed way the problem of matter and of our perception of it." He is a Realist in accepting "*universalia in re* as absolutely irreducible factors in Reality," and the appearance of a plurality of irreducible sensible qualities.

He divides philosophical thought into critical and speculative, although he would probably have to admit that there is something speculative about some

¹ *Scientific Thought*. London, 1923.

The Mind and Its Place in Nature. London, 1925.

of our principles of criticism. But it is evident that he does not wish to accord to thought the exaggerated position which Idealists have too often claimed for it. "It is vitally important to distinguish between *facts* and the proper *analysis* or description of facts." With regard to description he frankly declares, "I do see clearly that we have only to compare a tune, as heard, or an emotion, as felt, with any conceptual description which we can give to them, to recognise how inadequate every conceptual description must be to Reality itself."

Thus it is ludicrous to suppose that physics and chemistry, constructed "to unify the correlations, which we find among a selection of the *sensa* of three or four senses," can give a complete account of the structure of all Reality. Broad's view of Emergent Vitalism, although it does not quite contradict this statement, does not go very well with it. For, according to that theory life would seem to be simply certain properties which emerge in certain physico-chemical complexes. On the other hand, in his discussion of the phenomena alleged to be real by some persons engaged in Psychical Research, he suggests a possible explanation by the admission of a "psychic factor." This view does not fit really well into the type of theory of emergence previously implied. With that theory, the view of epiphenomenalism, according to Broad suggested by our "ordinary scientific knowledge," "though on no strong positive ground," appears more con-

sistent. Further, what the nature of a persistent "psychic factor" "which is not a mind" can be is not made clear. He is inclined to the theory that the mind is a compound formed by the organism and such "psychic factor."

The conclusions at which Broad has arrived with regard to what we may believe about our own bodies and the external world appear to be a curious and highly debateable combination of the contentions of Realists and Idealists. Admitting the possibility and reality of introspection, he shows that the knowledge it may give is limited. Further, "our belief in the existence of other minds is not reached by inference; and our belief in the existence of material objects is not reached by inference."

Broad acknowledges the claim of religious experience to be seriously considered. He is even inclined to admit the possible truth of what so many Oriental religions claim, that the "capacity for such experiences can be cultivated by a suitable mode of life and a suitable system of training and meditation." Further, he suggests that "in so far as this can be done without detriment to the critical faculties it deserves the serious attention of philosophers." Nevertheless, his statement that those who have mystical religious experiences are seldom well fitted for philosophical criticism and construction is a judgement based on a conception of philosophical criticism and construction related with other forms of experience and knowledge. It might equally

well be maintained that the geniuses concerned with the knowledge of the external world or of human psychology are seldom well fitted for philosophical criticism and construction, if we form our conception of these in relation with the principles and methods of mystical experience.

Philosophy according to Broad does not lead us to much which could be regarded as certain. Critical philosophy tends to show that by induction we can arrive at the best at probabilities. Speculative philosophy is at the best a guessing at truth. Nevertheless, if we are to avoid narrowness, it is essential that we should make the attempt of philosophical speculation to attain a synoptic view.

In referring to the thought of Moore, it was remarked that it has certain affinities to Platonism, and it has been seen that most of the other thinkers mentioned in this chapter also place importance on the recognition of universals as objective. A markedly Platonic character seems also to be evident in the latest statement of the views of *Alfred North Whitehead*¹ as given in his *Lowell Lectures, Science and the Modern World*. Though in this book there is frequent use of the term *emerge*, and the

¹ *The Concept of Nature*. Cambridge, 1920.

Science and the Modern World. Cambridge, 1926; and other mathematical and philosophical works.

Since the above was written, Whitehead has given a more detailed account of his views on religion in *Religion in the Making*. Cambridge, 1926.

author explicitly refers in his preface to the work of Lloyd Morgan and of Alexander, the impression given by the text is of a very different position from that which they suggest. Whitehead, who, in order to avoid certain suggestions such as are involved in the subjectivism with which modern philosophy has been tinged, calls universals "eternal objects," says, for example, that eternal objects such as colours, sounds, scents and geometrical characters are required for Nature and are not emergent from it. Thus, apparently, according to him, while universals are "eternal objects," required for the very being of temporal process, it is of "particular occasions" or events that one may talk of emergence.

Now "each eternal object is an individual which, in its own peculiar fashion, is what it is." In other words, it is distinctive, it cannot be described otherwise than as "being itself." But though this distinctiveness, its "unique contribution," remains identical, some variation occurs in respect "to the difference of the modes of its ingression" in particular occasions. Unfortunately Whitehead gives us no clear idea of what is meant by "ingression," and, what is worse—for it covers up the most serious difficulties—no satisfactory account of the alleged "differences of modes" of such ingression. And there appears to be another factor admitted when it is acknowledged that it is "impossible to complete the description of an actual occasion by means of concepts."

While wishing to acknowledge the discreteness recognised by modern physics, Whitehead insists on the togetherness of events. "Actuality is through and through togetherness." He presents a form of philosophy of Nature as organic. "Science is taking on a new aspect which is neither purely physical nor purely biological. It is becoming the study of organisms. Biology is the study of the larger organisms, whereas physics is the study of the smaller organisms." What has been said of "eternal objects" shows how different Whitehead's view is from that of materialism: his account of nature as organic indicates the entirely different starting-point involved. "The organic starting-point is from the analysis of process as the realisation of events disposed in an interlocked community." The understanding of this actuality "requires a reference to ideality." Further, coming to the question of the knowledge of other "mentalities," this philosophy of organism gives no support to the contention that it can only be by "indirect inferences from aspects of shape and of sense objects."

In the development of Nature there are two sides, a given environment with organisms adapting themselves to it, and a creation of their environment by the organisms. In the thought of the period just passed the latter was neglected. Whitehead points out that for that purpose adequate forces are only available with "societies of co-operating organisms."

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But with such co-operation and in proportion to the effort put forward the environment has a plasticity which alters the whole ethical aspect of evolution."

It might seem as though there are infinite possibilities of actual occasions with the different modes of ingress of eternal objects, and so infinite possibilities of different courses of events. As a matter of fact, experience manifests certain occasions and courses of events. If we accept such particular occasions as real and not as an illusory appearance of a Reality behind the scene, we must provide a ground for the limitation. Here Whitehead's argument is somewhat similar to one put forward by Alfred Edward Taylor. Limitation has its ultimate ground in God, who is the "Principle of Concretion." "God is the ultimate limitation and His existence the ultimate irrationality. For no reason can be given for just that limitation which it stands in His nature to impose." And "no reason can be given for the nature of God, because that nature is the ground of rationality." It is in the region of particular experiences that we must seek further knowledge of God.

Whitehead maintains not only that "Religion is the expression of one type of fundamental experiences of mankind," but also that "the fact of the religious vision is our one ground for optimism." "Apart from it," he says, "human life is a flash of occasional enjoyments lighting up a mass of pain and misery, a bagatelle of transient experience."

This vision is "of something which stands beyond, behind and within the passing flux of immediate things; something which is real, and yet waiting to be realised; something which is a remote possibility, and yet the greatest of present facts; something that gives meaning to all that passes, and yet eludes apprehension; something whose possession is the final good, and yet is beyond all reach; something which is the ultimate ideal, and the hopeless quest."

CHAPTER VI

THEISM

THE exposition of Christian Theology and the development of its study in Britain have been marked by influences of the national character both in the endeavour to avoid extremes and in the predominance of practical purpose over intellectual curiosity and subtilty. With remarkably few exceptions in its long history, British Theology has accepted the main doctrines and practices of tradition. There has been no great uneasiness manifested when these have not been completely harmonised intellectually or have appeared not in entire agreement with conclusions in other regions of knowledge. Not infrequently British Theology has adopted the attitude that the intellect of man is unable to attain complete understanding of ideas he ought none the less to accept. Even in the years of storm and stress of the Great War, there was never the intellectual interest in religious problems or the widespread reading of theological literature which, to judge by the sales of certain books, was not unusual in Germany in times of peace. Among those who participate in organised religious life it may be said that the majority profess to believe the leading

doctrines of Christian orthodoxy, and conform with traditional practices: they are either unable to appreciate or do not trouble about the intellectual difficulties. A small minority think that it is possible to attain a satisfactory conception of religion in accordance with the best of modern thought. They also maintain that a healthy continuance of religion is necessary. On the whole, however, in spite of the desire on the part of ecclesiastics to represent it otherwise, there is in Britain a marked neglect both of intellectual interest and of practical participation in religion.

Although there are individual differences of presentation, leaning on one side towards mysticism, on another towards a theoretical pantheism, on still another towards a form of pragmatism, it may be said that the teachers of theology in the universities and theological colleges sustain a fluctuating position with features distinct from those so far discussed. For this the most appropriate name is Theism. Statements and defences of this position along popular and semi-popular lines are fairly common. Most frequently they lead on to and include discussions of particular dogmatic beliefs, especially concerning the incarnation of deity in Jesus Christ, his part in atonement, his resurrection, and the doctrine of the Trinity in the unity of the Godhead.

Among the Unitarians the fundamental principles of Theism are considered with more prominence and more freedom from traditional influences. At the
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present time, however, in almost all the traditionally orthodox Christian communities in Britain, there is such a tolerance of liberal theological ideas among the more advanced thinkers that inner compulsion is rarely felt to secede from these communities for the purpose of joining the Church of the Unitarians. Although attention is to be given here chiefly to the fundamental principles of Theism, regarded by friend and foe as the basis of intellectual Christianity, it must not therefore be supposed that there is any general movement among British thinkers definitely to deny real significance to particular Christian conceptions. But this notwithstanding there is a widespread conviction that the importance and significance of these conceptions have been grossly exaggerated in the past.

Information as to contemporary British thought of a definitely Christian theological character in the full sense of the term must be sought in technical theological treatises. The present survey is limited to some thinkers who have propounded forms of Theism more or less independently of Christian dogma. Of these *Arthur James Balfour*¹ has attracted attention not merely because of his political eminence during a long life, but also because in his

¹ *A Defence of Philosophic Doubt: being an Essay on the Foundations of Belief*. London, 1879; 2nd ed., 1920.
The Foundations of Belief. London, 1895; 8th ed., 1901.
Theism and Humanism. Gifford Lectures. London, 1915.
Theism and Thought. Gifford Lectures. London, 1923.

philosophical writings he manifests two attitudes in harmony with main movements of British life and thought, and with constant features of British character. The first is evident in the nature of his opposition to the form of Naturalism which prevailed in many intellectual circles during the earlier years of his academic and political life. The second, his insistence on the importance of the consideration of values in relation to Theism, is in conformity with some of the more prominent movements of philosophical thought in recent years.

Balfour expounded his objections to Naturalism on the one hand and to Idealism on the other in a volume entitled *A Defence of Philosophic Doubt* as long ago as 1879. Critically examining the grounds upon which Natural Science must ultimately rest, he concludes that they cannot be established irrefutably on the basis either of rationalism or of any form of empirical induction. Everywhere we come to limits which we can hardly hope to surpass. Our senses have not been evolved for research. Science is possible only if we assume the law of universal causation, but this and the principle of the uniformity of Nature are both incapable of purely logical justification. He contrasts the world as it appears with the world as science assures us that it is, and convicts the procedure of science of inconsistency, in that its knowledge depends on that of the world as it appears. It is not that science may not lead us to truths: Balfour would insist rather

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that it does do so in some measure. But that it does so only shows the importance and value of the postulates of causation and of uniformity, the acceptance of which is due to other than rationalistic or naturalistic causes.

Idealism is rejected by Balfour partly because he shares the general conviction that matter is something more than "a metaphysical invention," and partly because it appears to conflict with Natural Science. Turning to the main aspects of Theology, he finds its principles no less securely based than those presupposed in science. "Whether Realism or Idealism be true, whether either or both of them are consistent with science, this broad fact remains, that the world as represented by science can no more be perceived or imagined than the Deity as represented to us by Theology, and that in the first case, as in the second, we must content ourselves with symbolic images, of which the thing we can most certainly say is, that they are not only inadequate but incorrect."

In *The Foundations of Belief*, apparently the most widely read of all Balfour's philosophical works, he reiterates his objections to Naturalism, urging its disintegrating effects in relation to morality, beauty, and even reason itself. If Naturalism is the whole truth, morality can be only a bare catalogue of utilitarian precepts; beauty merely the chance occasion of a passing pleasure; reason "but the dim passage from one set of unthinking habits to

another." In contradistinction with narrow types of Rationalism which make discursive reasoning solely determinative, he maintains that other forces, which he sums up under the term Authority, have led mankind to, and keep them in the acceptance of, indemonstrable bases of belief. A genuine social community is not based on argument. "It is Authority rather than Reason to which, in the main, we owe not religion only but ethics and politics; it is Authority which supplies us with essential elements in the premises of science; it is Authority rather than Reason which lays deep the foundations of social life; it is Authority rather than Reason which cements its superstructure." In this conception of Authority is implied a widening of the basis of beliefs, a recognition of the forces of the social life as they are built up and expressed in tradition.

This "Authority," it appears to be suggested, also includes something of the "preferential" or "providential" influence of God. At least as much as Theology, science is compelled to postulate a "Rational Ground or Cause of the world, who made *it* intelligible, and *us* in some faint degree able to understand it." Thus Balfour turns to a definitely theistic view and from it considers the whole of knowledge. "It is not, I think, inaccurate to say that every addition to knowledge, whether in the individual or the community, whether scientific, ethical, or theological, is due to a co-operation

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between the human soul which assimilates and the Divine power which inspires. Neither acts, nor, as far as we can pronounce upon such matters, could act in independent isolation." Nevertheless there are defects in our present intellectual statements, and with our existing faculties they may be inevitable. We have no means of ascertaining infallibly the course of the future of humanity. As far as mere Positivism is concerned man may reach, may even have reached, a condition "beyond which no variation will bring with it increased intellectual grasp, increased vigour of imagination, increased moralisation of will, increased capacity for social life." On the other hand, developed religions offer us a wider view of human destiny.

Both knowledge and practical conduct are dependent upon what Balfour calls "inevitable beliefs"—which are neither self-evident axioms nor capable of proof. Men are induced to accept these by influences other than their own rational reflection. Though they are criticised in theory, they are accepted in practice. One such belief is that phases of consciousness initiate movement and guide energy: this seems inconsistent with a merely mechanical theory of rearrangement. The belief in an external world is also inevitable—a postulate which science is compelled to use though it cannot demonstrate its validity. The existence of other selves is an inevitable belief. Considering the remarkable agreement in familiar beliefs the validity

of which cannot be proved, Balfour maintains that men are led to accept these beliefs by some cause other than rational proof. This cause must be adequate. It cannot be non-rational; and the only other alternative is Divine guidance—God. "If intellectual values are to be maintained, the reality of spiritual guidance becomes the most important of our fundamental assumptions." "God is the condition of scientific knowledge. If He be excluded from the causal series which produces beliefs, the cognitive series which justifies them is corrupted at the root."

Within more recent years Balfour has stated and defended his attitude in two courses of Gifford Lectures. He claims to approach his subject from the standpoint of the plain man, for whom, he thinks, there is only one alternative: Naturalism or Theism. Balfour objects that on the naturalistic interpretation or description, the cause of the rational as equally of the irrational, the true as of the false, is reduced to "unthinking matter and purposeless movements." But a non-rational cause is not adequate for a rational effect. To root rational values in unreason is to destroy them as values. Any theory which does so is intrinsically incoherent. The rational, the beautiful, and the moral must have a source congruent with their own character: if they are to be regarded as matters of mere chance or purposeless accident they would not have the value for us which we attribute to them.

The highest values can be maintained as such for us only on the condition that they are not simply the psychic accompaniment of kinds of atomic agitation, but a relation of spirit to spirit. These values have a significance other than that of survival. And they lose most of their appeal if they are not based upon or if they do not originate from somewhat congruous with their worth. Only as a revelation from spirit to spirit can beauty retain its full worth. Beauty in Nature is thus felt as a revelation of God to man; not as a purposeless and transitory accident. Balfour's argument is not an argument from design, but that if design is absent, if there is mere chance—for him the only other alternative—value is lost. Their full significance does not appear to be comprehended if they are looked upon as due to blind transformations of physical energy. "A work of art requires an artist not merely in the order of natural causation, but as a matter of æsthetic necessity."

A similar contention must be made with reference to history. What concerns us is "the history of self-conscious personalities, and of communities which are (in a sense) self-conscious also." If history is nothing but the interchange of the ultimates recognised in modern physics, it becomes virtually "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." The historical is constituted largely by the ethical, and in this the fundamental question is not as to "means," but as to the "ends" or aims

of moral life. Upon what basis can Naturalism admit any form of altruism, any work for posterity? "The unborn cannot be sued: the dead cannot be paid." The ends towards which ethics points are "ends in themselves," and, as Balfour rightly insists, "their value is quite independent of argument, neither capable of proof nor requiring it." These values of higher ethics must be accorded an origin congruous with their character. If their origin is purely naturalistic, they are difficult to maintain: they are then the accidents of an accident. It is far more reasonable to believe, says Balfour, that "ethics must have its roots in the divine, and in the divine must find its consummation."

Absolutism is no more, it may be considered even less satisfactory than Naturalism. For theories which ultimately imply that life is mere appearance, and the end of man absorption in the timeless identity of the real, give history no significance: desire is inherently vain, and effort inherently worthless. The consideration of history, with the long assent of knowledge, love and æsthetic joy from their earliest beginnings with their prospect of future splendour, suggests divine inspiration. The details of the historical process become merged in a general impression which leads us to thoughts of the whence and the whither. Balfour's view suggests an acceptance of the belief of Divine guidance in general, which takes the form of inspiration in knowledge. The course of scientific

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discovery itself suggests "something in the nature of a directing influence and of supramundane design."

Thus Balfour maintains that considering the whole realm of human interests, the values of knowledge, beauty, and goodness, if we give them full significance we are led to Theism. Without Theism, Humanism loses half its value. He is equally insistent that the nature of God thus implied corresponds with that which is experienced in religion. The conception of God which identifies Him with a "purely logical Absolute," for whom "no man has ever yet been moved to do anything at all," he definitely rejects. He has never been able to combine the all-inclusive Absolute of metaphysics with the God of religious experience. The religious life conforms with an idea of God as "a spirit among spirits," whom "men can love, a God to whom men can pray, who takes sides, who has purposes and preferences, whose attributes, howsoever conceived, leave unimpaired the possibility of a personal relationship between Himself and those whom He has created."

The most thoroughgoing exponent of philosophical Theism in recent times in Britain was the late *James Ward*.¹ Trained as a philosopher, Balfour

¹ Died 1925.

Naturalism and Agnosticism. Gifford Lectures. London, 1899.

The Realm of Ends, or Pluralism and Theism. Gifford Lectures. Cambridge, 1912.

Psychological Principles. Cambridge, 1921.

Philosophical Essays. Cambridge, 1927.

nevertheless wrote his later works as the conclusions of a man of wide general culture appealing to men of general culture. Ward, in his own way equally cultured, develops his views as a technical philosopher appealing especially to technical philosophers. Inspired by a profound appreciation of the fundamental problems of human existence, he strives to show that Theism is, at least, as rationally justifiable an interpretation of the facts as either Naturalism or Absolutism. In his own view, it is definitely more acceptable. His influence has been great upon most of those among contemporary British philosophers who adhere to a form of Theism, and he has furnished many with the general plan of their statements and the chief arguments in their defence.

Naturalism and Agnosticism, published the year before the beginning of our period, stimulated and guided much of contemporary British philosophy. In it Ward subjects to a thoroughgoing examination both the Synthetic Philosophy of Herbert Spencer and the Naturalism of Thomas Henry Huxley, with their agnostic pretensions. His examination of the nature of knowledge reflects the effects of his studies in psychology, in which he was a pioneer. He shows that scientists admit that science is an abstract of symbols representing the concrete world. The mechanical explanation, the statement of quantitative constants, and the apparently exact descriptions are no more than averages which approximate

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to the individual cases but can never be known to have absolute validity. Science as an intellectual scheme has its source in mind. The response which Nature makes to the effort of mind to understand it justifies us in maintaining either that Nature is intelligent or has intelligence behind it. He goes on in detail to the conclusion that the world should be interpreted "throughout and strictly in terms of mind."

In arriving at this conclusion Ward rejects any form of dualism regarding the world as both matter and mind. Dualism makes mutually exclusive halves out of the one world. To him it seems that on the one side you would have merely subjective states, ultimately for each mind a simple solipsism. On the other side the objects or things would be no more than automata. As opposed to this he contends that experience shows no inexplicable dualism, but a duality of "object presented and subject affected," of "subject striving and object attained." This differentiated world is in historical process, active and directive. The course of this historical evolution towards ends appears to increase in complexity.

So far Ward simply rebuts the naturalistic and agnostic contentions of Spencer and Huxley and other late nineteenth-century scientists, and outlines the ground for a general theory of reality as spiritual. His detailed exposition of his reasons for adopting a Theistic conception of this spiritual universe forms

the substance of his second series of Gifford Lectures, *The Realm of Ends, or Pluralism and Theism*. Having disposed of one form of opposition to Theism—that supposed to be especially dependent upon natural science—he turns himself to the other chief form of opposition—supposed to be especially dependent on logical and metaphysical reflection—Absolutism. He objects to the pretension of starting with the One, the absolute Unity. Nature, as distinct from the subject which knows it, cannot be the One. Neither can a Supreme Subject taken apart from the world of which it is conscious. The ideas of an Absolute Object, of an Absolute Subject, and of an Absolute Self-consciousness which somehow unites them, are ideas reached by abstraction. The neglect of the subject of knowledge, the tendency to treat the object as though alone real, has led to Naturalism. The misrepresentation of the nature of the object leading to the conception of the subject as alone truly real has led to forms of subjective idealism. The spiritualism which Ward teaches insists on the unity and correlativity of subject and object. Nevertheless even as so considered it is to be remembered that the universe seems to be only partially accessible to our theoretical and practical activities.

In contrast with the method of assuming Unity at the outset, starting from an idea of the One, Ward's philosophical Theism starts from the admission of the plurality within experience. "The
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teaching of history seems clear: the solution is not to be obtained by passing over the Many at the outset, trusting to deduce them afterwards from an absolute One that is reached *a priori*." He maintains that that method has proved illusory: "the seeming attainment of the One has meant the disappearance of the Many." Reflection finds itself as within and sharing in a historical process, to the beginning of which it cannot attain. "We must start, where alone reflection on experience can arise, at the level of self-consciousness." This self-consciousness, with its explicit knowledge of the duality of subject and object, is to be considered as revealing the nature of the individuals forming the Many of Pluralism. For such Pluralism the highest and the lowest realities are selves. And that implies for Ward, in accordance with his psychological investigations, behaviour directed to self-conservation or self-realisation. "Each, so far as in it lies, is to be conceived as 'proving all things and holding fast that which is good.'"

Thus Ward's standpoint, taking the subject and object in the unity of self-consciousness, is that of the concrete individual and of history. He looks upon the evolution of the world, or worlds, as due to the activities of ultimate individual realities. It is not a mere unfolding of what is already and eternally existent in an Absolute One, but a real process of new creations. We can start not from the beginning but only from within the historical process. Though

there is no evidence that the process started from chaos, historical evolution does manifest a certain regularity and orderliness as a result of conduct. We are not concerned here with as it were physical atoms, but with active conscious beings, none of which are exactly alike, as the atoms of the physicist are supposed to be. What is produced by their conduct are not new entities but new values. The existence of a plurality of active beings, striving thus for the production and enjoyment of values, is a fact which is central for Ward, and he will allow nothing to lessen the significance of this fact. Each individual has some measure of freedom and on each the process in some measure depends. There is nothing absolutely inert: everything is active and purposive. Reality, therefore, is not to be conceived as a system of concepts, of universal ideas, but as an historical intercourse of concrete agents. History is itself in large measure a process of trial and error inspired by the idea of the good.

But no merely pluralistic system is adequate to the facts of experience. It may be doubted if mere Pluralism has ever been seriously maintained. Otherwise it is certainly no more absurd to talk of the universe as a totality of individuals than of it as one absolute individual. Yet Ward insists that a beginning for Pluralism is inconceivable. There are difficulties which Theism is able to meet better than Pluralism, which, in addition, is not adequate to the facts. The admission of other necessary

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principles and ideas involves a radical difference of outlook in several ways. Theism enables us in thought to relate the lower and the upper limits of the series of individuals and the historical process. There is some unity of plan in Nature and in History which it does not seem possible to regard as the product of a mere plurality of individuals. There are characteristics of the values aimed at in History which also point to unity and to the whole being a single realm of ends. The ground of this unity Ward sees in God.

God as the ground of the unity or unities of experience is not a being in the series but transcends it. Ward insists on the profound difficulties in the concept of creation, but no other concept can be satisfactorily substituted for it. God in creating the world, that is, according to Ward, the plurality of individuals, has endowed each with its degree of self-determination, its power of free activity. But this granting of freedom, though it implies some form of self-limitation, does not mean the abnegation of the deity. For the freedom of the individual is limited in the range of its exercise. History, therefore, has real significance in being constituted by the free activities of individuals within the limitations ordained by God. Reality is not a mere machine, nor an unchanging eternal Absolute in whose being we share; nor is it a pluralistic chaos of entirely undetermined beings. Rather, as Ward admirably puts it: "*All* is not decreed: the world is not

very definite influence among broad-minded Christians both within and beyond the borders of the Anglican Church. A champion of intellectual sincerity among leaders of religion, he was convinced that reason demands and is worthy of confidence. Much of his work carries on the traditions of the earlier Oxford Idealism, but it is even more definitely a modern representation of Berkeleynism. He is emphatic in his contention that all existence is either mind or is the experience of mind. Like Berkeley he regards belief in an existence of matter independent of mind as mere superstition. But as the so-called external world is not dependent for its existence on any particular human mind, we are led to affirm the existence of a Supreme Mind of universal range, that is, God. God is the Universal Knower.

The world is, however, a realm of causes, and the nature of efficient cause we experience only in the exercise of our own wills. God, therefore, is to be considered also as Will. The uniformity of Nature, and the implications of the theory of knowledge and of morality, require the admission of the reality of God as their source. Further, men, however dimly and partially, are aware of moral obligation and of the ideal of moral goodness. God is to be regarded as known to men in their appreciation of moral goodness. The character of his main arguments leads Rashdall to keen opposition to forms of Absolute Idealism which

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elevate the idea above the personality or mind which thinks it. He is insistent that one mind (as we know it) cannot contain other minds within itself, and in consequence he rejects all views which describe man as part of God. There is no true analogy or adequate ground for such a view of God, and it conflicts with the facts of moral life.

A collaborator in *Personal Idealism*, Rashdall insists on the fundamental reality and significance of human personality. On the one hand, through the nature of human personality man may come to know something of the nature of Divine Personality. Yet, on the other hand, as a Christian Theologian, Rashdall contends that through the nature of Jesus as an incarnation of the Divine, man may learn what perfect personality is and so obtain guidance for the development of his own personality. It cannot be said that Rashdall is very successful in his attempt to formulate a conception of human freedom opposed alike to mechanical determinism and to sheer libertarianism. Hesitation in accepting a view of genuine freedom eventually adds to his difficulties concerning the problem of evil, by which he is led to accept the idea of God as finite.

The idea of God as finite is not a very uncommon one in contemporary British thought. At an earlier time it was defended by John Stuart Mill, and it has been forcibly expressed in popular form more recently by H. G. Wells. Rashdall is one of the few philosophical thinkers who have openly pro-

fessed and defended the conception. Recognition of the reality of evil leads him to face the alternative that either God wished to create all good and He could not, or He could and He would not. In the former instance He may be regarded as all-good but not all-powerful; in the latter all-powerful but not all-good. Rashdall chooses the former alternative. This choice is in no way capricious on his part. He is so much a moralist that he would save his belief in God as good at any cost. More than this: he is convinced on metaphysical grounds that there is no significant meaning in the term "infinite power": power as such is finite. He felt the difficulty, even the impossibility of forming any conception of infinite power. But in his discussion of the term infinite power he treats power quantitatively. Nevertheless elsewhere he maintains that power is the expression of will, and it is a question whether the category of quantity can rightly be applied to will. Even if it be replied that though the category of quantity cannot be applied to will, it can be to the power which will at any one time exerts, it is still open to question whether the term infinite does not imply a qualitative character of deity known in the religious experience.

Rashdall is a keen critic of pantheism in any form. It involves either a denial of radical distinction between good and bad, or the affirmation that God is both good and bad. Either view is detrimental to the moral convictions and efforts of mankind.

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Further, it seems to contravene the belief in the immortality of the individual soul, in that in the usual Absolutist form it suggests some form of absorption into the Whole with the loss of individual personality. Personal immortality Rashdall considers to be vital to the moral life. Only thus has it real significance and only thus can it hope to reach its ideal. Rashdall's system is thus an ethical Theism with personality as its leading concept. His distrust of anything suggestive of pantheism prevents his appreciation of mysticism, which he appears to regard as almost inevitably bound up with some form of pantheism. In consequence he is somewhat insensitive to religious experience of a distinctive kind other than is implied in moral enthusiasm. He interprets Christianity almost solely from the point of view of ethics. Jesus the Christ has value for us chiefly in being an incarnation of the goodness of the deity.

A more thorough examination of moral values has been made by another British thinker, *William Ritchie Sorley*,¹ who develops his theistic philosophy with special reference to the implications of moral values and the moral life. This he has done pre-eminently in his Gifford Lectures: *Moral Values and the Idea of God*. Already in 1884 he had

¹ *Ethics of Naturalism*, 1884.

Moral Values and the Idea of God. Gifford Lectures. Cambridge, 1918.

A History of English Philosophy. Cambridge, 1920.

published a penetrating criticism of naturalistic theories of the nature and purport of morality. This did from the side of ethics what James Ward's criticism of Naturalism did from the side of the theory of knowledge. The co-operation of Ward and Sorley for a quarter of a century at Cambridge, notwithstanding the non-theistic attitude of McTaggart, made Cambridge during that time the home of a vigorous philosophical Theism. Sorley insists that, for the attainment of a true and adequate philosophy, values constitute part of the facts which have to be taken into consideration. And he maintains that the result of his inquiry is "that a view of reality which gives impartial recognition to the realm of values as well as to that of existents cannot dispense with the idea of God."

Having in his earlier work shown that Naturalism and naturalistic evolutionary theory are inadequate to account for the true character of the ethical, Sorley in his Gifford Lectures makes a careful examination of moral values and considers the metaphysical and theological implications of the Moral Life. He inquires what bearing, if any, the full recognition of ethical principles and of the facts of morality have on the idea of ultimate Reality we are justified in forming.

The moral idea is not to be obtained simply by consideration of man's environment. Nor can it be said to exist solely in human minds. Those minds recognise it in part, aware of its objective character

impressing itself upon men with a sense of command or compulsion. Values are not simply subjective creations. "We are compelled to form the conception of an ideal good or of a moral order, which, as the condition of actualised goodness, must also be regarded as in some sense having objective reality." Ultimate reality—the ground of everything that is real in experience—must include this moral order.

At first sight, however, it appears as though there is an opposition, a lack of congruity between the order of Nature and the order of moral values. On the one hand causal connection: on the other there is ideal evolution. Now moral values can be realised only by beings who are genuinely free. Expressed otherwise, as we know them, moral values belong only to persons. In fact all values have a subjective side: even so-called material things have worth only as means to values experienced by minds. Viewing morality, therefore, as of persons, further consideration shows that Nature is a "fit medium for the fashioning and training of moral beings." Indeed, man and Nature are seen to participate in a purposive scheme. Nature is a realm in many ways suited to be a medium for training in moral goodness, and it may reasonably be regarded from certain points of view as subservient to the moral order. Now this significant relation between Nature and man is not to be regarded as fortuitous, or simply accidental. "The recognition of the moral order

and of its relation to nature and man " leads to the acknowledgement of intelligence and the " Will to good " in the ultimate source of reality. The objective ground of the moral ideas must be admitted to be the mind of God. The unity of Reality, thus considered, is not fundamentally physical or *quasi* physical, but ethical, involving freedom and purpose.

The existence of evil is generally considered to be the greatest obstacle to theistic belief. It is, therefore, as Sorley himself observes, somewhat paradoxical that in his main contention he finds a theistic argument on the very fact of evil. The fact of imperfection finds its only acceptable explanation in the interpretation of existence along ethical lines. An imperfect world is required for the making of moral beings. They have " to be tried in, and habituated to all kinds of circumstances in order that they might *grow* into goodness." And for true moral achievement freedom to do right or wrong is essential. This evil is to be considered either as a means adopted in relation to the fulfilment of a world purpose, or as one result of the freedom without the exercise of which there can be no moral personality. Evil is then either temporary failure or a temporary means in pursuit of the Divine purpose.

The whole course of the argument depends upon the objectivity and universality of moral values. They are not due to the merely particular wishes of

any individual or group of individuals, but have a certain compulsion which may be experienced by one and all. Yet, though thus objective as apprehended, it is of the very essence of these values that through moral effort they shall become the root qualities of subjective disposition and the principles of practical conduct. Moral growth illustrates the fact that this subjective moral disposition is best cultivated when acquaintance with moral values comes through personal contact; when moral values are felt and perceived as present in character rather than in formal propositions expressing universal principles. This in itself emphasises the personal character of moral values, and gives strong grounds for the conviction of the personal character of their source. Incidentally it may be suggested that this is in accordance with the view—not discussed by Sorley—that increasing knowledge of moral values comes through some sort of personal contact or communion with God such as religious saints have claimed.

The ethical assumes a position of importance also in the philosophy of *Alfred Edward Taylor*.¹ A scholar with a very wide range of interests and comprehensive knowledge, Taylor is also a religiously-minded man. His earlier works, *The*

¹ *The Problem of Conduct*. London, 1901.

The Elements of Metaphysics. London, 1903.

Theism. (In *Hastings' Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. XXII. 1921.)

Problem of Conduct and *The Elements of Metaphysics*, were the product of a period when he was distinctly under the influence of, indeed one should say a brilliant younger member of, the school of Absolute Idealism. In later years, to some extent owing to the influence of James Ward, he has become definitely an advocate of Theism. All these circumstances taken together make him an interesting figure among contemporary British thinkers. Nevertheless, though an indefatigable writer, it may be surmised that his *magnum opus* has yet to come. In a recent autobiographical sketch, Taylor tells us that he has come to the conclusion that "in a way" the business of metaphysical philosophy is "a modest one." "It has to be content to recognise that in the sciences, in history, in morality and religion, it is dealing with a reality which is in the end simply 'given,' and not to be explained away." Its task is to fathom the significance of real religion and morality and to reach a reconciliation of the "exigencies of scientific thinking with the imperative moral and religious demands of life." He warns us against the temptation to have a "system" which leaves no "unexplained mystery at the root of things."

In a brief exposition of Theism and its history he maintains with good grounds that the general trend of Western thought from the time of Plato to our own day has been towards Theism. By Theism he understands "the doctrine that the ultimate ground

of things is a single supreme reality which is the source of everything other than itself, and has the character of being (a) intrinsically complete or perfect; and (b) as a consequence an adequate object of unqualified adoration or worship." This position may be distinguished from Absolutism in that since God is the *source* of all that exists, it is implied that He is not all that exists. There is sufficient in the previous pages of this book to justify the acceptance of Taylor's view that at present Absolutism cannot be considered a serious rival to Theism. Contemporary Realism is far more formidable. Against this he makes the sweeping charge that it is not an interpretation of existence, but a particularly abstract way of stating some of its problems. Yet, on the face of it, there seems no more difficulty in accepting with the Realists "specific individual existents standing in certain definite relations to other specific individual existents" as ultimate, than to start with a Supreme Being as one of the existents, or as the only existent.

There is no character of hesitation or apology about Taylor's statement of Theism and the grounds of its justification. There is no suggestion that in religion one is concerned with anything less "real" than on other sides of life. He insists that the witness of consciousness to our identity as subjects of experience is to be accepted as evidence of a real fact about the world. Then, as the majority of Theists in ancient and modern times, he finds that

the greatest intellectual satisfaction is to be obtained only through the idea of the absolute good which unites the realm of facts and the realm of values. It is in this connection that he finds "the great danger of the whole Hegelian way of regarding things," in "that it dissevers the 'eternal verities' from all contact with 'historical' actuality." To the inevitable doubt whether facts and values are so related through the idea of the absolute good, he suggests the type of answer given by Pascal: *Tu ne me chercherais pas, si tu ne me possédais. Ne t'inquiète donc pas.* Only because man is in some way aware of absolute truth, obligation, and beauty, can he consider the validity of human judgements. "In like manner it is only because the absolutely Good and utterly Adorable has not left Himself without a witness in our hearts that we feel the need of an object of worship and are driven on from the worship of trees or streams, or animals or mighty men or anthropomorphic deities, towards an object in which our adoration can at last find rest, because that on which it is directed is adequate to sustain it." And this indeed is the only ultimate basis for Theistic belief, "that prayer and adoration need no more justification than the questioning attitude towards things which leads to science, or the impulse to make things of beauty leads to art, or the desire to do right leads to morality." With regard to the formation of the idea of God, Taylor maintains that the least inadequate conception is one

based upon analogy with the human spirit at its best.

There is a similarly resolute conviction in Taylor's views concerning the nature of men. Neo-Realists commit an "elementary blunder" in their analysing activity into mere succession, and so eventually discarding causality as commonly understood by metaphysicians. Once admit the reality of causality and the question of the moral freedom of men has significance. With this question Taylor has dealt at length, maintaining that "Moral victory and moral defeat would be alike impossible in a timeless world, and in a world in which time-order was reversible the one would be indistinguishable from the other. Whatever may be the case with time as a 'characteristic' of nature, time as a feature of our moral life absolutely *must* be marked by an irreversibility of direction which makes it impossible to assimilate 'real duration' to a spatial 'dimension.' And from this demand for the reality and irreversibility of temporal order in the moral life, it follows that moral responsibility demands as a condition of its genuineness that human acts shall be genuinely contingent: it must be said of all 'motives' of choice between one specific good and another that they 'incline without necessitating' that the assent we give to them is a 'free' and unconstrained assent. If the conception appears a paradox, at least it is a paradox forced upon us if we take the moral life and man seriously." Further,

not merely the denial of freedom but also the denial of permanent personality is fatal to the conception of personality as of moral significance.

The significance of values is not so guardedly described in the philosophical writings of *William Temple*,¹ an eminent Anglican ecclesiastic. The opportunity for wide influence which his position gives him makes it necessary to enter into a more detailed and critical consideration of his views. For many reasons he ought rightly to be included, along with Pringle-Pattison, amongst the Absolute Idealists. However, it may be believed that it is his intention to present a definite Theism, contrasted with some fundamental characteristics of Absolutism. His work is an example of the apparent inability of many Oxford thinkers to appreciate radical distinctions, and their proneness to high-sounding generalities.

Temple virtually assumes his whole position in the statement: "It is true that we have to choose between postulating a rational universe, and accepting complete scepticism." But: Is this true? Some of us have the conviction that we are faced with both the rational and the irrational. It is not a satisfactory retort to this to say that what we have is only an appearance of irrationality; for to

¹ *The Nature of Personality*. London, 1911.
Mens Creatrix. London, 1917.
Christus Veritas. London, 1924.

that it may be urged that even an appearance of irrationality would still be an irrational constituent of Reality. The element of irrationality is thereby in no way eradicated or reduced. One might be equally justified in maintaining that we have only an appearance of rationality. Temple seems to leave entirely out of consideration the vast amount of error, and the factors of the inane and simply stupid in human experience.

In harmony with this assertion of complete rationality or hopeless scepticism is the view, already noted as fundamental among the Absolutists, of Reality as perfect. Temple assumes this from his consideration of absolute values. Once more the conception of the whole is dominant. "Totality is the very form of the Good." It is quite reasonable to maintain that "the good is a whole," but that does not justify the statement that "the whole Universe is good." The whole need not be any the less whole if it contains good and bad. Temple admits differentiations in the whole, as, for example, the Persons of the Trinity of Christian theology and human selves, but he gives no good ground for rejecting differentiations of another type, those of good and bad, with the possible existence of a personal devil as of a Holy Spirit.

The interesting suggestion is made that though past facts cannot be altered their value can. But this does not justify the conclusion that the presence of evil in the world at any moment or through any

period of time is not in principle opposed to the perfect goodness of the whole. That *X* a condition judged in itself evil for a moment or a period of time contributes to a condition *Y* which could not be otherwise attained, or is a factor in a whole, does not in the least alter the character of the evil of *X* as an experience in itself. My toothache to-day or the feeling of malevolence on the part of my neighbour are as such evil. Their inclusion in a wider whole makes them no less evil to me. All that we seem justified in asserting is not that Reality is perfect, but that the totality of experience including these evils at any moment or through any period of time *may* be better than would have been possible without them. It is a gratuitous assumption that the whole is perfect, unless in circular fashion you define the perfect as the whole. For Christianity such a contention is to go too far.

In common with many Absolute Idealists, Temple allows high-sounding phrases to cover a lack of clear thinking. He assures us that "eternally all values are realised in God." That may be so interpreted as to beg the question. It also raises problems which are nowhere seriously faced by Temple. If God is not differentiated from the world we have a form of pantheism for which all events are temporary appearances, species of illusion. But appearances to whom? Either to Deity or to other spirits or to both. In any case it is difficult, if indeed at all possible, to ascribe perfection to the Whole. What

might perhaps be maintained in opposition to this scarcely veiled Absolutism, is a form of Theism which would say "all the values of God's own nature are eternally realised in Him," but not all values, that is, the values of God's own nature and the values of the world as differentiated from Him. Temple's exposition suggests a confusion between the apprehension of absolute value in the sense of ultimate or intrinsic value, and absolute value as constituting the absolute whole of values. His passage from recognition of the fact of the apprehension of absolute or intrinsic value to the affirmation of an Absolute of values is too facile.

The close resemblance between Temple's position and that of Absolutism as distinct from the more definite Theism of this chapter is seen in some of his statements relative to the human self. At one time, he says, "man as an individual is so constituted that all Reality *may find* (italics ours) a focussing point in his consciousness." Later he says, "one in whom all Being *finds* a focus." Yet as far as we know no man has "a spectacle of all time and all existence." Even more, there is a form of identification: "every person, just because self-conscious, is the universe coming to consciousness of itself," or some part of itself. But is every person the universe? The same implication is found in the contention that "the system of experience which he is" determines his course at every stage. "This self-determination is the activity of Will so far as

Will is yet formed, and also its development towards completion; it is his freedom in process of perfecting itself." One is inclined to ask how it is that certain qualities of the self are subdued or rejected and others developed, if the self as a whole is the Will—and if the individual is the Universe; and how if so there is any room for true moral regeneration or change of character.

At another time the being of the self is described as though simply a social complex. "His whole being is a condensation of society. He is his fellow-men's experience focussed in a new centre." His "core of self-hood," "his distinctness," is his angle of vision. "There is no impenetrable core of self-hood which is his and his alone." If this is true it seems that there are not a number of beings each having its angle of vision, but just one being with all the angles of vision. And then, not simply in isolation one from another, but also as a whole.

If we interpret absolute value as intrinsic value and not as the value of the Absolute or Whole, then it may be agreed that "to be conscious of absolute value is already to be in some form of intercourse with God;" and that "this form of intercourse with God comes to every human being." In other words, the consciousness of intrinsic value is the apprehension of an ultimate, and so far, according to Temple, a form of knowledge of God. He rests his argument chiefly on the most certainly universal "sense of absolute obligation." The goal of

evolution is the intercourse with God which this apprehension of values implies.

Reality is described as of different grades or levels—suggesting here an influence of Alexander's thought on Temple's exposition. Each level only attains its completion in being indwelt by the next higher. For man to come to perfection he must be indwelt by God. Thus Temple sees in the Incarnation of God in Jesus "the natural inauguration of the final stage of evolution," and thereby associates his philosophical exposition with Christian dogma. Nevertheless there is much in Temple's writing suggesting that the relation of God to man in Jesus is of a distinct and unique metaphysical character, different from what may be ascribed in any other instance.

In following out this specifically Christian position Temple contends that Jesus can be known as God only as performing the functions of God. Jesus is said to do "what only God can do." But what are these functions? Loving and forgiving, which are described as the essence of Christianity, are just the things which it is fundamental for Christianity to maintain that every man should and can do. What else is there that "only God can do," that Jesus has done or does, which has significance for us men, or for God or for both? Many must find it difficult, indeed impossible, satisfactorily to fill with content the term "Perfect Man" when applied to Jesus, especially if they consider the meagre

culture of his earthly life. They may admit that they owe to him and the Church which has grown up through his influence their highest moral and religious inspiration, but they cannot see that he supplies in all realms of human experience the presentation of God "adequate to every human need," "the one adequate presentation of Man."

With reference to the life of Man, Temple rightly insists on the significance of friendship, the deliberate association of free persons. "Personality is the capacity for Fellowship." Man's destiny is realised in attaining unity of his individual personality and the unity of universal fellowship. Along with this is also the conception of an ideal universal in its comprehension, for the great individual is one who reacts to the greatest number of the elements of Reality, the greatest variety of its aspects.

Values occupy a central place in the thought of the most generally impressive of contemporary teachers in the Anglican Church, *William Ralph Inge*,¹ Dean of St. Paul's. As a writer of epigrams and of English prose Inge is almost without equal among living British thinkers. But the nature and extent of his influence is open to doubt. The British

¹ *Christian Mysticism*. London, 1899.

Personal Idealism and Mysticism. London, 1907.

The Philosophy of Plotinus. Gifford Lectures. London, 1918.

Outspoken Essays, I, II. London, 1919; 1922.

The Idea of Progress. Oxford, 1920.

Press, although probably the most staid in the world, is still sufficiently sensational to centre its attention upon what momentarily appear to be the most striking utterances of leading public men. The Dean has impressed reporters mostly by his criticisms. Consequently his influence is probably mainly negative and transitory. Even the more thoughtful of his actual readers do not appreciate fully the significance of his attitude, because it is in so definite a manner opposed to a fundamental trait of the spirit of the times. An outspoken critic of the claims of democracy on one hand and of the Roman Catholic Church on another, as well as of many ideas current amongst rich and poor, learned and ignorant, the apparent vehemence of his moods has attracted attention more than the positive implications of his constructive teaching.

The chief characteristic of modern times which Inge has most definitely challenged is its belief in and enthusiasm for "progress." The conception of the Superman, the theory of the continued historical advance of mankind, the view that biology gives us evidence of evolution such as to form a "sure basis of confidence and hope," the conviction that conative striving is the fundamental nature of man, all these have been illustrated in the references to thinkers considered in previous chapters of this book. Enthusiasm for progress though suffering a great shock by the late war was not killed by it. In many quarters the needs of reconstruction have

fanned into flame the desire to make, and strengthened the conviction that one can make, a better world. "The belief in progress," says Inge, "not as an ideal, but as an indisputable fact, not as a task for humanity, but as a law of Nature, has been the working faith of the West for about a hundred and fifty years." This "superstition of progress" enslaved three philosophies, those of Hegel, of Comte and of Darwin. "Herbert Spencer asserts the perfectibility of man with an assurance which makes us gasp: 'Progress is not an accident but a necessity. What we call evil and immorality must disappear. It is certain that man must become perfect.'"

In reading Inge's detailed criticism of the idea of progress as viewed from the standpoint of biology, one's mind naturally recalls the contentions of Julian Huxley. "It is a pity," concludes Inge, "that our biologists, instead of singing pæans to Progress and thereby stultifying their own researches, have not preached sermons on the sin of racial idolatry, a topic which really does arise out of their studies. '*L'anthropolatrie, voilà l'ennemi*,' is the real ethical motto of biological science, and a valuable contribution to morals." In short, the "alleged law of progress has no scientific basis whatever." Historians have begged the question by assuming that what has survived is better than what has disappeared. An important survey of the facts will give good grounds for doubting the complete accuracy of this view.

Abjuring altogether any idea of progress in the universe as a whole or of the unending progress of any part of it, Inge is nevertheless unable to deny progress in some sense. "There may be an infinite number of finite purposes" in which "some Divine thought may be working itself out," so that with reference to these one may talk of progress. But one might reasonably suggest that biological evolution up to man and the course of human history may be one such purpose, vast to us, though to Him perchance infinitesimal. If so, as far as man is concerned the idea of progress may reassert itself with all its force. Having opposed some erroneous applications of the idea of progress and aroused doubt as to the rationality of the enthusiasm shown for them, it is to be regretted that Inge has not dealt at length with the nature and importance of an acceptable conception of progress in relation with finite human life.

Instead of that Inge's philosophy and religion, which are inseparable, are concerned predominantly with the Absolute Values of the True, the Good and the Beautiful. These are not presented as abstract concepts or ideals, products of thought. They are fundamental realities in the reality of God. Here is seen the important positive side of Inge's work. He, more than any other one person in our time, has been a pioneer in drawing the attention of British non-Roman Catholic Christians to the nature and significance of Mysticism. Though at first

comparatively small, his influence in this matter has been directly and indirectly more and more widely felt. In an early book, *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, he challenged what, not quite fairly, he considers to be a defect of Personal Idealism, maintaining that for it selves are so "impenetrable" as to make any mystical relationship with God impossible. The reality which is Absolute Goodness, Truth and Beauty, that is, God, is known in the intimate experience of Mysticism. In the mystical act "faith passes for a time into sight. Formless and vague and fleeting as it is, the mystical experience is the bedrock of religious faith." He insists, with Plotinus, that the capacity for this mystical knowledge "all possess but few use." For him, in spite of the weakness of his own experience, "the testimony of the great cloud of witnesses who have mounted higher and seen more" than himself, "the evidence of the saints, seems . . . absolutely trustworthy."

In this experience—and all true apprehension of Wisdom, Goodness and Beauty is such—one comes to that which is in some sense contrary to the idea of progress which places realisation chiefly in the future. In this experience one apprehends the "Eternal." "The real world is a coherent organic unity, spaceless and timeless, but including all happenings in space and time in their proper relation to itself, that is to say, *sub specie æternitatis*." So it is, therefore, that "our true personality has

for its content the eternal values." Nevertheless, paradoxically, as Inge admits, "our place in the eternal order has to be striven for and won." It is in this connection that Inge ought to have worked out an acceptable conception of "progress." He has hinted at it in many places, implying that there is a process of ennoblement of the soul by which it becomes more able to enjoy eternal values. "The mind which ultimately assigns values is the mind of God: but men in varying degrees can 'think God's thoughts after Him.' The power to do this is the reward of training and discipline." In all that is involved in the stages of this training and discipline true progress may perchance be found.

Thus, Theism, according to Inge, is not based upon a mere inference from a knowledge of Nature or the soul of man: it is a statement of the knowledge of God which is one of direct apprehension, generally termed mystical, but involved in every experience of absolute values. Together with this direct knowledge of God there are various attempts to form conceptions of His nature. God is not identical with the world: nor is the world a necessity of His nature, as forms of Absolute Idealism suggest, though He is essential to its existence and continuance. As the reality of absolute values He is perfect. This does not necessarily imply that evil is an illusion. Though the problem of evil seems to be insoluble, the existence of evil appears to be

an inseparable condition for the development of the "good will." Inge thinks that we are inclined to "magnify the problem of evil by our narrow and exclusive moralism which we habitually impose on the Creator." But surely a perfect Creator should be capable of being wholly moral as well as wholly beautiful.

The true meaning of immortality is to be found in eternal values. Its true significance is something not simply of the future but also of the present. "Eternal life and survival are not the same: yet they are related to each other. Eternal life is a quality of reality: survival is a quantitative measure of duration. Eternal life belongs to the conception of reality as a kingdom of values: survival conceives human existence as a page of history." In contrast with the attitude of enthusiasm for progress Inge would turn attention to the immediacies of the eternal life, to eternal values which may be shared here and now. In this he sees the true character of Christianity, which, except among Roman Catholics, has been distorted almost beyond recognition by the superstitious belief in progress. He declaims against the prevalent secularising of Christianity in the common suggestion of a millennium on earth as the result of social reform inspired by the ideal of Christian brotherhood. As contrasted with that, Christianity is essentially "other-worldly," its aim being "eternal life." As Christianity presents it, this life involves pain and suffering.

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Impressed upon mankind through the crucifixion of Jesus, this fact is bound up with the character of God's Goodness which is Love. Thus Inge avows his acceptance of certain Christian dogmas. "Love is a personal thing, called out by persons, and exercised by persons. 'We love God because He first loved us.' Neither natural law nor the beauty of the world suffices to manifest or call forth the love which binds together man and his Creator. Nor would any display of almighty power for our sakes evoke it. So far as I can see, nothing but a personal Incarnation and the self-sacrifice of the Incarnate could either adequately reveal the love of God for man or call forth the love of man to God."

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

THE general impression gained by a survey of the contemporary thought of Great Britain is not an inspiring one. On all sides there are doubts and uncertainties, and a lack of resolute conviction with regard to a possible and acceptable philosophy of life. On most sides there is a tendency to compromise, a reluctance to make sharp distinctions. There is no vigorous comprehensive philosophy which, with established intellectual supremacy, might at the same time dominate the minds and guide the lives of the people. The trend of the more vigorous philosophical discussion is towards the consideration of details bringing out the differences more than the agreements of philosophical thinkers. There is no movement towards the development of a strong group which might become a definite force in the life of the country. In some directions, and unfortunately chiefly among the younger thinkers, philosophy is given a narrow connotation, and the great problems of classical philosophy, the problems of the meaning of life and experience, are shirked entirely or relegated to a very subordinate position. In a very definite sense,

therefore, it may be said that the contemporary thought of Great Britain is that of a period of transition. There is only half-hearted confidence in the traditional systems and in those of the immediate past, and there is grave doubt as to the capacity of the newer movements to grapple seriously with the profound problems of existence.

Though this lack of a sound generally acceptable philosophy must be lamented by all who look to thought for guidance not merely with regard to details but also to the main attitudes to life, it should not be supposed that the present conditions are without valuable characteristics. There is much that we have even at present to be thankful for, which may be of the greatest importance for the future development of a synthetic philosophy. In every sphere there is a demand for the rejection of dogmatism. In the realms of natural science, of history, philosophy, and theology, there is an insistence on admitting mere possibilities simply as such: there is an abstention from claiming certainty for that which can rightly be considered only probable. Acknowledgement of the rich variety of facts is regarded as more important than attempts at a theoretical formulation of them: vague generalisations which ignore most of the significant features of events are accorded little worth. The amount of research and the ingenuity of inventions in particular fields impress ordinary laymen and appeal to their imagination.

These varied interests of modern life in Britain, this recognition of the multiplicity of types of actual values, form a most important advance over the preceding period with its shallow and ineffective adoration of the concepts of the True, the Good and the Beautiful. From specific detailed consideration there is a reasonable hope, not merely that relief may be obtained from many of the particular evils of human existence, but also that there will be a definite increase in those particular experiences which make life worth living. In all this it can hardly be denied that for the vast majority it is human existence on earth, the present acquaintance with Nature and mankind and work and enjoyment in relation to these, that mainly occupy the attention and call forth enthusiasm and effective desire. Whatever the future may hold in store, whether on earth or elsewhere, contemporary British thought is overwhelmingly concerned with the present and its mainly mundane affairs. There is, to be sure, regard for the higher values of human culture, but with a certain limitation of vision and interpretation. Even by religious teachers the Kingdom of God is interpreted most frequently in terms of social welfare, brotherly harmony and co-operation here and now.

The deficiencies of this type of life are felt by individuals—at some time or other probably by most. But with the majority the sense of dissatisfaction rarely lasts long, and few are able to

diagnose the character of their discontent, to find its causes or in any way to give an intelligible account of it. How long it may be before there is a widespread awakening to these deficiencies, and an organised attempt made to overcome them, cannot be foreseen. With the present trend of thought of the younger British thinkers there is little hope that it may be soon. For it must be confessed that until there is a philosophy as a really living power the thought of the generality of mankind will tend more and more to stagnation. There are few signs of the early development of such a philosophy.

The sense of dissatisfaction with the mundane has in some instances allied itself, especially since the war, with certain common feelings and desires accentuated by the loss of relatives and friends. With so many dying in youth or in the prime of life, cut off before the promise that their lives contained had been realised, there has been in recent years an impression stronger than usual that there must be a meaning in the lives of these departed, and so of all mankind, other than that which appears in relation with merely earthly values. It is this discontent with the transient and this sentiment for the departed, rather than intellectual reflection, that has led to the acceptance of the belief that this is but a portion of a wider existence. With the majority of those who have been led to think thus, it is the feeling of incongruity between their love for particular persons and a scheme of things in

which these were so abruptly withdrawn that is the chief ground of their attitude. They cannot believe that their loved ones have ceased in every way to exist, and they desire again to assume close relationship.

In consequence of the growth of these beliefs, the movement of Spiritism has assumed a more prominent place in British life, though the movement is still comparatively small. For a time there was a definite increase in the number of persons who endeavoured to establish communication with spirits of the departed. A number of thinkers of eminence had for many years been active investigators of the alleged spiritist evidence for human survival after death, as, for example, Alfred Russel Wallace, Henry Sidgwick, William Crookes and Oliver Lodge. Eventually Oliver Lodge has become a staunch believer, not merely in such survival, but also in the possibility and actuality of communications between living persons and those who have departed.

Notwithstanding the ardent advocacy of Spiritism by so eminent a scientist as Lodge, and so popular a writer as Conan Doyle, contemporary British thought has not been greatly influenced in this direction. The general public is not markedly impressed. The possibility of fraud in the means used to establish the existence of the spirits, as, for example, alleged spirit photographs, leads not merely critical thinkers but the ordinary common-

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sense Briton also to distrust any such form of demonstration. Further, much which is presented as evidence seems capable of explanation as due to telepathy, the transmission of thought directly from mind to mind or at least by means not yet observable by the senses. The reality of the subconscious, which modern psychology seems to have proved, makes a theory of telepathy possible, according to which the apparent messages from another world through spiritist mediums may be by a transmission from the conscious or subconscious states of persons present or even at a distance though still on earth.

More than all else which prevents Spiritism from obtaining any but a small following and making any profound impression on contemporary British thought is the character of the messages which it is alleged have been received from spirits of departed persons. They seem to have little significance for mankind over and above principles already possessed, and they are too often suggestive of weak mentality. No considerable body of persons of proved sound judgement has yet been convinced that any specific valuable piece of information has been thus received. The irrefutable establishment of such receipt of any message, however trivial, would probably have an important influence in British thought, in strengthening the tendencies to a broader outlook. Though at present very little affected by Spiritism, British thinkers are generally tolerant of those who concern themselves with it.

Not only is there now little abuse of it as "black magic": there is also comparatively little aggressive criticism of it. Most commonly it is simply ignored.

It is also worth noting that forms of modern Theosophy, such as are associated with the name of Annie Besant, make little impression on the British mind. They appear to represent on the one side well-meaning but somewhat childish ethical platitudes, and on the other a blend of bad psychology and a pseudo-oriental mythology. The best of those who were ever attracted in this direction, a small but significant body, are separately constituted in the "Quest Society," which endeavours in reverent yet scientific and scholarly fashion to seek for truths which may be hidden in the lore of mysticism. By the publication of *The Quest* it exerts an unobtrusive yet real influence in British thought.

The movement of so-called "Christian Science" has made more progress in Britain, but here again it has probably not been great. The British mind discriminates between what seems to be the core of truth in such a movement and the feeble sentimentality and the confused thought with which it is associated. The power of the mind over the body may be widely believed, but in the hour of need there is more confidence in surgical skill and the application of scientific medical knowledge. The influence of the mind in disease is recognised and

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insisted upon by medical practitioners. The late W. H. R. Rivers¹ says that "the salient feature of the medicine of to-day is that these psychical factors are no longer allowed to play their part unwittingly, but are themselves becoming the subject of study, so that the present age is seeing the growth of a rational system of psychotherapeutics." It is significant, further, that this eminent scholar should end his work with a statement which implies the importance for health of a well-balanced mental attitude, in short, of a satisfactory philosophy of life. "One of the most striking results of the modern developments of our knowledge concerning the influence of mental factors in disease, is that they are bringing back medicine in some measure to that co-operation with religion which existed in the early stages of human progress."

During the last ten years there have been signs of increasing interest in and research into the thought of the Far East. The contemporary thought of Britain has not yet been seriously influenced by it. This has been partly because those who have been engaged in Oriental studies have been philologists and students of the history of religions rather than philosophers. With the recent increase in the literature on the subject of Indian philosophy, there is hope that the attention of British philosophical thinkers will be attracted. In spite, however, of the increase in opportunities for

¹ In *Medicine, Magic, and Religion*. London, 1914.

gaining information on Oriental philosophy, it will be properly appreciated only if its methods are understood. These are not of the same type as those of a philosophy based upon the principles of a theory of knowledge of the world of physical science. Only if the fundamental attitude and methods are understood is it likely that Oriental thought will be able to help us to remedy defects in our own thought.

Isolation for a time from intercourse with British thinkers and contact in the East with the thought of the East helps one to obtain a position from which one may see some of the deficiencies of contemporary British thought in a truer perspective. Together with gratitude for the greater richness of life which modern detailed investigation brings, there is dissatisfaction at the predominantly piecemeal character of modern knowledge. There is a felt need for a serious attempt to bring together the truths and values which the different movements have revealed. Further, there is a need, not so often felt, that these should be accorded the place really due to them. At times the triviality of some of the highest earthly values is borne in upon us; but with most Britons this is admittedly rare. And this rarity is due to one of the main defects of contemporary British thought. It is dominated by practical interests and the immediately apparent. There is a practical Naturalism which is much more widespread than its theoretical counterpart,

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and this practical Naturalism influences forms of thought which are opposed to it. In their judgments and practices of daily life, Idealists and Theists are inclined to be mainly naturalistic, and in consequence their theoretical expositions have "naturalistic" facts too predominantly in view. There is not only a lack of coherence between asserted beliefs and real beliefs, but between asserted beliefs and practice. There is a lack of proportion in estimating the values of what goes to make up life. With the affirmation of the reality of spiritual values in a wider and enduring existence, attention is occupied and energy employed chiefly with the acquirement of the relatively insignificant.

It would be wrong to suppose that the implication of this is Asceticism. It is not world-weariness, such as in former ages led to a demand for something other than the apparently discrete values of human life, which is the cause of the present demand. There is already more than enough asceticism, enough lack of enjoyment, but it is in the main enforced, not often voluntarily chosen. Nor is it to be supposed that it should be chosen. The practice of asceticism can bring no more satisfaction to-day than it did in the days of the Buddha. What seems to strive for expression is a need to find one's place in a whole wider than this earthly existence. Even from an intellectual point of view it is becoming more and more forced upon us that this existence with its culture does not form a satisfying

unity. Threescore years and ten, a little more or a little less, of such culture does not satisfy the deeper demands of human nature. This is a felt experience which philosophy has no right to ignore. Phrases like the Unconscious Will, the Life-Force, the *nisus* to deity, may depend for some of their vague significance on this experience, but they misrepresent more than represent its true character.

The problem is rather this: the attainment of an attitude and a philosophy which, while recognising all the values of this world and the right and duty of mankind to enjoy them, shall yet give to man as a spiritual being an existence with its core outside of this world. Man though related to the world is to be thought of as not "of it." The problem concerns the orientation of man's self within existence as not centred in the earthly though including that within the circumference of its experience. It is a question not simply of ordering the earthly interests back to their proper place, but also of the cultivation of those neglected sides of human nature required for its balance and its satisfaction. There are here two related practical problems: How conduct shall be modified to make the earthly non-central; and, How the non-earthly sides of human nature shall be cultivated. And there is the theoretical problem of the attainment of an adequate philosophy.

These practical problems are worthy of the consideration of the best of British thinkers, and even

those of lower rank could occupy themselves with little else that is so important. But the present task must be to consider the directions in which an adequate philosophy may eventually—though probably in the distant future—be attained. This must be done with reference to those forms of philosophical thought of our time which have already been discussed.

Naturalism, supported by Realism, makes abundantly clear that there is a vast existence which may be called Nature which has a structure not dependent upon man. But though not dependent upon man, man is in some way or ways related with it. Naturalism is not able to show that man is entirely a part of Nature conforming completely to the principles which seem involved in its structure. Admitting that man's body is part of Nature, Realism is not committed to the view that the mind or self of man is. There is a tendency to acknowledge the uniqueness of minds, but so far Realism may be said to be in the throes of discussion of the problem. Absolutism professes to introduce us to a realm of perfection in which Nature and human minds are somehow included and yet somehow "transmuted" and transcended. Its strength lies in its almost sole concern with universal concepts. It is involved that these are, as it were, objective to (for it "transcend") human minds. Realism also insists on the objectivity of universals. Absolutism is not able to show that the logical identity of these universals

with themselves involves the ultimate psychological and metaphysical identity of all human minds which think them, whether as an Absolute Consciousness or an Absolute Experience. And its discussions of time and change show, not the unreality of these, but the inadequacy of static concepts to express them. Pragmatist Humanism stands firm on the reality of the human self, and supported by Realism acknowledges time as a significant characteristic of experience. Pragmatist Humanism is aware that the human self is an active being seeking satisfaction of desires in relation with Nature and other selves. It fails, however, to do justice to these desires if it does not admit a desire for a knowledge of truths independently of whether they may or may not be extrinsically useful. Theism has been propounded most often as a theory which accepts the idea of God as a necessary hypothesis. This idea is of a Being who, as Perfect Wisdom, Goodness and Beauty, is the source at once of the intelligibility and beauty of Nature with its particular structure as of man's intelligence and capacity to understand and appreciate it; the source of the moral ideal as of man's capacity to apprehend it and his sense of obligation to strive to attain it. Yet with rare exceptions this idea is put forward as arrived at by inference rather than as connoting an apprehended Reality. Such Theism thus fails to do justice to that with which it should be most closely related, the religious experience itself.

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The most healthy tendency in contemporary British thought is the determination to acknowledge the distinctive, as it is and wherever it is found. But along with the acknowledgement of distinctive details there must be an effort to obtain some form of comprehensive view. An attempt to indicate such a view has been made by John Stuart Mackenzie¹ in his *Elements of Constructive Philosophy*. Admirable as is the aim and careful as is the writing of that volume, it suggests an imposition upon the facts of experience of a form of unification predominantly of the character of Bosanquet's Absolutism allied with features of Alexander's Realism. A view which seems to be more justifiable is that of Leonard Trelawney Hobhouse's² philosophy of development, which, more realistic in method, with a genuine faith in mind and the ideal, does not explain evil away, and is more free from doubtful Absolutist conceptions.

Important as it is to obtain a comprehensive view, it seems more important, and more in line with the spirit of advance in contemporary British thought, to admit the multiplicity of facts and values even though it is not possible to find principles of their significant unification. Probably for a considerable period the predominant attitude must be one of eclecticism. This may be expected to take two

¹ *Elements of Constructive Philosophy*. London, 1917.

² See *Contemporary British Philosophy*. Vol. II and works there mentioned.

main forms. One, that of the essentially critical and sceptical type of mind, will accept only those things which can satisfactorily pass the most rigorous tests. This might be called *Minimalism*, representing the least that one must accept with full inquiry. The other, that of the non-sceptical type of mind, will accept everything not known to be itself false or incredible. This might be called *Maximalism*, representing the most that one may accept with full inquiry. The minimalists will exercise the very necessary function of criticism and clarification: the maximalists will stand for freedom and comprehensiveness. Scholars of both types are needed. But if the question is raised as to which attitude is most suited for the development of a philosophy of life for the vast majority of mankind, the answer must be, the maximalist.

Maximalism need not be a mere eclecticism. For although it may not be possible to combine facts and values together in a significant system, it is possible to discriminate in such a way as to accord some constituents more importance than others. There might be a Naturalistic eclecticism, an Idealistic eclecticism, a Humanistic eclecticism, a Realistic eclecticism. There are, however, reasons for maintaining that a genuine Maximalism will be a form of Theistic eclecticism. A Naturalistic eclecticism is contrary to Maximalism in shutting out the supernatural. The believer in the supernatural may believe all about Nature and something more. An Idealistic eclecticism asserts that things

are "for" consciousness: Maximalism may accept this and maintain that they have nevertheless a reality of their own. A Theistic eclecticism may certainly include all that either a Humanist or a Realistic eclecticism or both may include, and something more.

What is required is not simply the most comprehensive acknowledgement of what constitutes Reality. There is a need of some view of man's orientation in it. In meeting this need Theistic eclecticism shows itself to be something other than a mere eclecticism. It does not seem impossible that Reality might have been a mere collocation. It may be thoroughly systematic, through and through an intelligible unity. It appears to be neither a mere collocation nor an intelligible unity. It does not seem impossible that Reality might have had nothing central in any meaning of the term. Theistic eclecticism recognises as a matter of fact that centrality is a very important characteristic of reality, and it is through this recognition that man should be able to orient himself in existence.

There is a sense in which man is his own centre: all his experiences start out from his own causation or come within his own reception. And veritably he may commune with his own soul. For Theistic eclecticism God is not the whole, but in religious experience He is apprehended in a definite manner as the centre of the whole. Man is thus considered to attain his true orientation when he makes God the object of his central activity, or, otherwise

expressed, the central object of his activity. Man may commune with God. It is then that all else, Nature and other selves, which come within the circumference of his experience fall into a subordinate place. Man is not static, and God, other selves and Nature, with whom and with which he is in relation, are not static. By the character of his active relation with God he may come to know of the character of a possible co-ordination and significant harmonising of those constituents of Reality which at present appear and perhaps are chaotic. By the actions and reactions between God, himself, other selves and Nature complete co-ordination may perchance be achieved.

If God is the central constituent of Reality, if the relation of man to Him should be the central relation in man's life, it seems at least probable that if man does not make this the central relation he will get an inadequate and it may be false view of the constituents of Reality, as well as of his proper relations to them and their relations to one another. There is an interesting question, for example, as to the origin of moral ideas, the ideas which precede or come with moral advance. These are not simply products of reflection on the past and present: they have something of the character of inspiration, coming with an impression of authority. It may not be mere mythology that through the ages men have described the moral as divine command. It might be worth while inquiring, even as an empirical

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question, as to whether the most important moral conceptions have or have not come to us through persons eminent for their religion.

History may not teach us much as to the co-ordination of the constituents of Reality, but it might indicate something of the general direction of advance. Contemporary British thought is surprisingly neglectful of the philosophical consideration of history. Even though man may have to depend upon inspiration for ideas to guide further advance, a consideration of history might save him from repeating blunders. A due appreciation of history broadens the outlook and widens the relations of men. History appears to be constituted by the relation of individual lives on earth to one another and to the physical world. But there is no awareness or any other form of knowledge of any one principle or any manner by which the details of the historical are significantly united. What we have is rather a number of interwoven histories going on in this life and seeming to point for their completion beyond. The extent to which these histories may be interwoven on any inner plan or plans is open to great doubt. Maximalism may believe that there is a plan into which all fit, or ought to fit, but it must affirm that at present no such plan can be seen. In the absence of this it must simply insist on the full acknowledgment of the multiplicity of particular histories.

And with regard to the future, Theistic eclecticism

as a form of Maximalism includes the doctrine of immortality. The acceptance of that doctrine does not necessarily prevent the acceptance of any valuable element in any other form of eclecticism. Though having no proof for immortality, Maximalism, not finding that it has been proved false or incredible, thus accepts it as essential to a broad view of human existence in contrast with a narrow one.

As for Theistic eclecticism God is central, from its point of view it is essential that for real advance in British thought there should be more serious consideration of religious experience. In this connection attention may incidentally be called to that strain of mysticism indicated in the first chapter of this book as apparent in the writings of some of our most eminent literary men who in no way associate themselves with traditional forms of religion. So again it is worth while inquiring into the grounds of certain "acknowledgements" made by leading British exponents of Naturalism. At least one Realist admits that religion is a type of fundamental experience. Taylor and Inge seem to recognise that in this alone the ultimate basis of Theism is to be found. Recently some few British theologians have been aroused from the general formalism of British theology by Rudolf Otto's *Das Heilige*.¹

A genuine Theism affirms the awareness of deity as definitely as it affirms the awareness of the physical world and of other human selves. But it is

¹ Translated as *The Idea of the Holy*. Oxford, 1923.

evident that awareness of all kinds is subject to development. So it may be maintained that by the methods of the experimental sciences there is an increasing awareness of the nature of physical realities. And it is quite possible that with a better understanding of telepathy, mankind may eventually have an increasing awareness of the nature of selves. Similarly, the "vision of God" may require distinctive functions of the mind of the percipient, and these may be subject to development. For this, particular practices may be necessary of the kind which, though often in crude forms, have constituted persistent elements of religion in history. Man may not have developed far in the direction of religious knowledge. One thing is certain: that human language is pre-eminently concerned with the physical and the social, and few of its terms are suitable for application to this third sphere.

In religion there is something more than the mere awareness of deity: there is also awareness of relations. It is not possible to reduce relations all to one type. The relations between selves are different from those between things; and the relations between selves and things are also different. Theistic eclecticism affirms the reality of relations between God and the world of things and selves. Some of these have been expressed in various ways in the history of philosophy and religion, as, for example, that He is the Creator, the Moral Governor, the Father, and so on.

Important as all these considerations are, it has nevertheless to be admitted that Theistic eclecticism, although not a mere eclecticism, is after all an eclecticism. It is not able to affirm that Reality has just one meaning, or that all meanings, all facts and values, are somehow subsumed under one meaning. It may be so; but so far Theistic eclecticism must confess ignorance of any such one meaning. It has to acknowledge realities, facts and values, of all types. It is not able to find significant relationships between them all. There does not appear to be any significant relation, for example, between the taste of a fine peach, a symphony of Beethoven, the imbecilities of a lunatic, the beauty of Cleopatra, the crime of Dr. Crippen, the courage of Nelson, and the devotions of St. Thomas à Kempis. Similarly it is not yet possible to see any significant relation between the various good values, physical, intellectual, æsthetic, moral and religious, which constitute "the good life." Theistic eclecticism nevertheless maintains that it is possible for a man to make any of these central for his activity. And while it is fundamentally opposed to the principle of sheer asceticism, it insists that it is with the attitude of the religious as central that it is most probable that the richest life and a significant unification may eventually be attained. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

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